



EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

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COVERAGE OF THE 71ST GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, AUGUST 24- SEPTEMBER 3, 1994

For immediate release:

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94135

Urging continued dialogue on thorny issues, General Convention ends in fragile peace

by James Solheim, Jeffrey Penn and Michael Barwell

When deputies and bishops left the Episcopal Church's General Convention in Phoenix three years ago, one vexing question was left hanging, "How does the church cling to its deepest sense of community in the face of disagreements?" By the end of the 71st General Convention in Indianapolis, the church seemed poised to offer a few suggestions: keep talking, do not turn away from those who disagree with you, keep your eyes on the larger vision.

Everyone who arrived at the August 24-September 2 meeting knew that there was no way to avoid the sexuality issues. They would be asked to try again to resolve the issue of the ordination of noncelibate homosexuals, to consider a call for a blessing of same-sex unions and to grapple with a common policy on clergy sexual misconduct.

"The Episcopal Church probably lives with ambiguity as well as any church, and I don't think that's a bad thing," said Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning at an opening press conference. "We know these are issues around which there is not simple consensus."

Yet many also sensed that questions of money and structure would loom large on the agendas of the House of Bishops and House of Deputies. Pressure from the grassroots was mounting for a complete revision of the national church structure and program—including scrutiny of the role of the General Convention itself.

In parishes across the church, in visitations by teams of Executive Council members and staff to almost every diocese, at a grassroots symposium in St. Louis and at five interim meetings of the House of Bishops, Episcopalians wrestled with questions about their common mission.

The good news was that, after a lot of hard work, the legislative process itself had been streamlined. The convention would be asked to deal with half the number of resolutions it had considered in Phoenix and a cooperative committee structure winnowed the resolutions to a more manageable volume.

Bishop's collegiality tested

On the first day the bishops tested their collegiality, carefully nurtured since its collapse in Phoenix where sharp words among some bishops on the subject of sexuality forced the house to meet in six unprecedented closed

sessions and to hold annual retreats to repair their collegiality. Developed in private meetings over three years and numerous drafts, a pastoral teaching on sexuality mandated in Phoenix became the focus of both hope and anxiety in the days leading up to the convention. The secrecy of the bishops in preparing the document added to the drama, fueling speculation about its contents. Weeks before the bishops' scheduled release date on the first day of convention, the conservative group Episcopalians United had leaked the final two drafts, further heightening the tension.

Called "Continuing the Dialogue: A Pastoral Study Document of the House of Bishops to the Church as the Church Considers Issues of Human Sexuality," the document served as a touchstone for all other discussions on sexuality during the convention. The document traces the church's positions, describes the discontinuities between the church's teachings and experience of its members, reviews scriptural interpretations, and offers guidelines on how to continue the dialogue.

But 18 bishops from Province 7 (composed of 12 dioceses in the Southwest) arrived at convention with a protest statement, signed by a total of 101 bishops. Their one-page "Affirmation" claimed the pastoral was a substantial departure from traditional biblical Christianity and it reaffirmed that the only appropriate context for sexual intimacy is within lifelong, monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

During a surprisingly civil debate, the bishops shored up the pastoral's language on chastity and marriage and downgraded its status from a teaching study document. And they voted to attach the Province 7 "Affirmation" to the pastoral.

Later, another statement, written by Bishop John Spong of Newark and signed by 55 bishops present at General Convention, asserted that sexual orientation is "morally neutral," marriage as an "honorable vocation for some of God's people," and "faithful, monogamous, committed" relationships of gays and lesbians are worthy of honor.

In the end the bishops decided to send the pastoral without either statement attached.

Who is a 'wholesome example?'

Opinion was split on interpreting the pastoral's final position on the ordination of noncelibate homosexuals in a guideline that commits the bishops to ordain "only persons [they] believe to be a wholesome example to their people according to the standards and norms established by the church."

In a press conference, Bishop John MacNaughton of West Texas, one of the signers of the Affirmation, called the bishops' vote a clear statement

that the decision to ordain noncelibate homosexuals is not a local option. Not everyone agreed.

The pastoral and the bishops' call for further dialogue were mentioned in almost all other discussions of sexuality, though the deputies sent the bishops a strongly worded request that they not use the pastoral as an excuse to side-step other sexuality resolutions. While their authorization was not needed to release the pastoral, the deputies joined the bishops in urging the church to study it by setting up a 12-member committee on dialogue on human sexuality that will include both bishops and deputies.

Having approved the pastoral, bishops dismissed at least some of the resolutions proposed on sexuality, including several that would have bound clergy by church law to adhere to traditional understandings of sexual behavior. These included resolutions to add canonical prohibitions against blessing same-sex unions or engaging in genital sexual relations outside of marriage. Bishops also discharged a resolution that would have removed "the obstacles to ordination for qualified candidates who are living in committed same-sex relationships."

After several attempts in previous General Conventions, bishops and deputies finally agreed to change the canons to ensure that no one will be barred from access to the ordination process because of "race, color, ethnic origin, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by these canons." The same language was lifted for a second, more general statement that says "no member of this church shall be denied access to full participation in the life, worship, and governance of this church" for any of the same reasons.

Disagreements still sharp

Despite their new-found collegiality, the bishops did act on several issues in the sexuality debates.

Bishops refused to develop rites for blessing same-sex unions, one of the fundamental issues in the convention's sexuality debate. After two days of debate, they did hammer out a substitute resolution that endorses a study of the theological and pastoral considerations involved in developing "rites honoring love and commitment between persons of the same sex."

While all liturgies for trial use are subject to General Convention's ratification, Bishop Frank Vest of Southern Virginia pointed out that a restriction would allay fears that "we are slipping ahead" of the church on the development of rites blessing same-sex commitments. On the final day of convention, deputies concurred with the bishops with little debate.

Another resolution, calling for educational materials to help families

understand and accept children's sexuality and sexual orientation, shuttled between the bishops and deputies before finally being approved. Bishops and deputies could not agree to distribute a report from the Standing Commission on Human Affairs that called on the church to address children and youth at risk, including those who are gay and lesbian.

New canons on clergy discipline

Although the Episcopal Church may be deadlocked over who may be ordained, it is agreed on complicated procedures for handling clergy misconduct. After three years of painstaking work by the Standing Commission on Constitution and Canons (SCCC) and an hour of painful testimony at a General Convention open hearing, bishops and deputies overwhelmingly approved a massive overhaul of the Title IV clergy disciplinary canons.

The new church laws, which go into effect January 1, 1996, provide more uniform and balanced procedures for bringing charges against clergy accused of misconduct, in prosecuting charges, and in protecting the due process rights of both complainants and the accused.

Despite forceful arguments over statutes of limitation on alleged abuse and a controversial provision grandfathering victims who are ineligible to file charges under current canons, bishops and deputies agreed with the majority of revisions proposed in the resolution (A-019/a). The only change was a minor "friendly" amendment by the bishops allowing a vestry to retain a suspended clergy person who is seeking treatment.

Modeled on the U.S. Armed Forces Uniform Code of Military Conduct, the new canons give clarity and uniformity to a process that in large part was left up to individual dioceses. The old canons, unchanged since their creation in 1915, were intended to deal primarily with issues of heresy and doctrine. Until the 1970s, cases of clergy misconduct "were usually handled privately by the bishops and clergy guilty of misconduct," explained Robert Royce, former chancellor of the Diocese of Long Island and the principal author of the SCCC's resolution.

"We had so much local option that the same set of facts in two different dioceses gave no guidance to either, and we felt that was not appropriate," said Royce. "So we have truly drawn this thing kicking and screaming into the modern era."

What they were looking for, said Bishop Robert Rowley, Jr. of Northwestern Pennsylvania and a member of the canons committee, was "a balanced set of canons in which clergy's rights are protected, the interests of the church as a whole are served," and in which victims feel secure in making

complaints.

'Christ at center' of budget

"Money could replace sex at the top of the church's agenda," predicted Bishop Don Wimberley of Lexington at an Executive Council meeting before convention.

Two issues simmered beneath the surface throughout the 10 days: how to finance a program and how to design effective structures. Proposals for a new funding formula were hammered out in support of the national mission fared well, but the convention could not agree on the efforts for more drastic restructure.

Determined to support a continuation of missionary work on the national level, convention approved a three-year, \$131.5 million budget that will challenge dioceses to go the extra mile in support of national programs. "We've tried to put Christ at the center of this program and budget," said Bishop George Hunt of Rhode Island, chair of the program committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance (PB&F). Convention approved a budget that responds to repeated calls for visible and significant funding for national and world mission responding to Browning's challenge to congregations and dioceses to reach for a larger vision of the church. Support for world mission will restore full funding at the 1994 levels for appointed missionaries, Volunteers for Mission and overseas dioceses for the next three years. It also will provide \$800,000 for a churchwide computer bulletin board.

Revised formula approved

The budget is based on a new funding formula that is expected to provide relief for dioceses that find it difficult to support national church operations. Russell Palmore of Virginia, a member of PB&F, explained that the "current funding system has been in place for 50 years [and is] based on income at the parish level of each diocese." But, he added, in most cases the increase of support to congregations has not been matched by increased giving to dioceses. "It has been a flawed system," Palmore admitted.

Most dioceses are working to support both the national church and local ministries, added Hunt. "But when push comes to shove, if you have a hungry person staring you in the face, you vote to feed the person you can see." Treasurer Ellen Cooke added, "There are three main factors [in the drop in available funds]. One is local economic conditions. The second is the desire to do more ministry on the local and regional level. And the third is, some people were taking positions for and against actions taken or not taken in

Phoenix. We hope that won't be true coming out of this convention," Cooke added, "but there is always that possibility."

The revised formula, which proposes a single asking rather than the old two-part apportionment and assessment, offers three options:

- A diocese can calculate the amount it sends to the national church based on the income received from its congregations rather than (as in the past) on the total income received by its congregations from their members. A diocese choosing this option then uses a new formula with five graduated percentage ranges: 16 percent on their first \$500,000, 19 percent for the next \$500,000, 22 percent for the next \$1 million, 25 percent for the next \$2 million, and 20 percent for income over \$4 million.

- As an alternative, a diocese may elect to pay the same amount it paid to the national church in 1994. If it chooses this option, the amount would increase by 3 percent in 1996 and 1997 to account for inflation. (During the past three years, dioceses paid an apportionment of .0375 percent and a General Convention assessment of .027 percent.)

- A diocese also has the choice of paying somewhere within a "covenant range" based on the new graduated formula. With this option, dioceses can pay either the lesser, greater, or somewhere between two amounts; the 1994 payment; or what they would pay under the graduated formula. Bishops and deputies also approved a new "Challenge Giving Program Fund" to support \$1.12 million in programs not in the budget adopted by the convention. The challenge giving program assures that any money received above the amount budgeted from the dioceses in 1995 for program -- projected at \$27.6 million -- would be applied to such ministries as support for ethnic minority scholarships, increased funding for black colleges, a grant for Cuttington College in Liberia, and grants to Jubilee and other social ministries.

Restructure plan fails

After three years of listening to a wide range of suggestions about the structure of the church, convention nearly adopted a plan that would respond to grassroots cries for change. In the end, however, bishops and deputies could not agree on the form that change should take.

Although deputies hammered out a resolution they thought would move the Episcopal Church closer to restructure, the bishops chose to endorse changes already being implemented at the national level such as reducing staff and reorganizing church program into a single Service, Witness and Education unit with six clusters.

Resolutions on restructure received mixed reviews. Deputies and

bishops soundly defeated the Executive Council proposal to study reorganizing the General Convention from a bicameral legislative body into a unicameral body. As in past conventions, deputies and bishops agreed that the time was not right to move the Episcopal Church Center out of New York.

The convention did, however, vote to reduce the presiding bishop's term from 12 years to nine, beginning with the election of a new presiding bishop in 1997. And it decided to include two youth on the committee to nominate the next presiding bishop.

Domestic issues revisited

In addition to debates on sexuality and money, the convention also struggled through a thicket of domestic issues. Deputies and bishops took care of unfinished business from the 1991 General Convention when they expressed the Episcopal Church's "unequivocal opposition" to any action by local, state or national government to "abridge the right of a woman to reach an informed decision about the termination of pregnancy," or to "limit the access of a woman to safe means of acting on her decision." While sidestepping political implications from the current national health care debate, the convention issued a strong call for universal health care. The resolution states that everyone should have access to quality, cost-effective health care services.

After lengthy debate, the bishops concurred with the deputies that the church should support civil rights legislation that entitles gay and lesbian couples to bereavement and family leave policies, health benefits, pension benefits, real estate tax benefits, and "commitments to mutual support enjoyed by non-gays married couples."

Based on a recommendation from the structure committee, the Joint Commission on AIDS was replaced by a committee of Executive Council that will be responsible for the oversight, evaluation, and strategic planning of the national AIDS ministry program in collaboration with existing networks.

International issues

Keeping faith with Anglicans around the globe, the convention also addressed trouble spots in the international arena.

In a strong support of the Middle East peace process, deputies and bishops affirmed the Israeli-Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) September 1993 Declaration of Principles, declaring that a durable peace process depended on the U.S. State Department adhering to "a single standard of justice" for both Israel and the PLO.

Convention also urged the U.S. government to require Palestinians and Israelis to renounce violence as a terror tactic and method of civilian control as a condition for receiving aid and loan guarantees. In carefully balanced

language, the resolution called on Palestinian police "to make every effort to apprehend violators" and called on Israel to release all Palestinian political prisoners and detainees.

Both houses approved a resolution urging a negotiated settlement to the tribal blood bath in Rwanda. The convention condemned the Japanese Imperial Army's exploitation of Korean women as sex slaves and called for reparations. The church also went on record supporting an end to U.S. military aid to the Philippines and supporting reduction and restructuring of the Philippine debt to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The resolution calls for ending military aid to the Philippines as a way to discourage the "total war" strategy of the Philippine government against insurgents.

International issues addressed

Turning their attention to relationships with Anglican partners and other faith communities, convention:

- bid farewell to five Mexican dioceses as they formed the new Anglican Church in Mexico;
- committed the church to continuing membership in the Consultation on Church Union (COCU);
- urged congregations to study proposals for full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in preparation for a final decision in 1997;
- welcomed the first official delegation from the Russian Orthodox Church; and
- heard a plea for balance on Israeli-Palestinian issues from a delegation of Jewish leaders.

Final, intense debate on women's ordination

To some observers it seemed ironic that in the closing hours of a convention where the main Eucharist celebrated the ministry of women, it faced its most serious impasse -- trying to reassure those who still oppose the ordination of women in the church and address the impatience of those who support the ordination of women.

After a series of parliamentary skirmishes over two days, deputies and bishops adopted resolution C004s/a directing both supporters and opponents of women's ordination to engage in dialogue, while officially recognizing both theological positions for the first time.

The debate was sparked by the disagreement between the bishops and deputies about forcing implementation of an 18-year-old canon on women's

ordination. In a lopsided vote by orders, the deputies staunchly defended their belief that the canon (Title III.8.i) guaranteeing access to ordination for both men and women should be implemented and not simply "addressed" as proposed by the bishops.

Frustrations over the issue forced the traditionalist bishops to take their gloves off. Bishop William Wantland of Eau Claire charged that the deputies' changes "clearly say to me -- and thousands more like me -- [that] there is no place in this church, you do not have a legitimate theological position, and the sole purpose of dialogue is to implement what one side has already determined will be universally so." He warned that he and others could be forced to leave the church "as a matter of conscience."

In the face of the growing resolve of the traditionalist statements, bishops who support the ordination of women found themselves caught in their own crisis of conscience.

"In trying to honor the conscience of others I find myself compromising my own conscience," said Bishop Vincent Warner of Olympia. Although he offered an expression of compassion for traditionalist bishops, Warner said that he would "not walk away from my support of the women of the church whom I stand beside."

Clearly exhausted, and after a dramatic call for prayer by a traditionalist bishop, the bishops amended the deputies' resolution in an effort to satisfy traditionalists who said that they were on the verge of being pushed out of the church. In their amendment to the deputies' resolution, bishops said that both opponents and supporters of the ordination of women to the priesthood "hold a recognized theological position in this church."

Two traditionalist bishops in dioceses that do not ordain women will be appointed by the presidents of both houses to a committee that will continue the dialogue on "how the canon can be implemented in every diocese of the church."

Ending with a fragile peace

Waiting for the bishops to complete their debate brought the House of Deputies to a stand-still. When word finally came from the bishops, the deputies heard one protest on the resolution before voting. The Rev. Ruth A. Meyers of Western Michigan read an impassioned statement that chastised the bishops for failing to assert that "the stated position of this church is that ordination to the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons is equally open to women and men. I am disappointed that after 18 years the bishops are not able to recognize this very basic fact."

But the deputies immediately halted debate, accepted the revisions

without comment and promptly adjourned until 1997.

Despite the obvious tensions, the strong pressures from all sides and continued willingness to compromise and live with ambiguities, most deputies and bishops agreed with Bishop Richard Grein of New York on his way to the airport that "we managed to keep the peace."

--Contributing to this report were Alice Clayton of East Tennessee, Jan Nunley of Rhode Island, David Skidmore of Chicago and James Thrall of Connecticut.

94136

Sexuality issues continue to provoke debate

by James Thrall

After 10 days of heated debate about human sexuality, fueled by small group discussions, private conversations and caucuses, the 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church adjourned having decided the dialogue must continue throughout the wider church. That ongoing conversation will be aided by a new pastoral study document from the House of Bishops, and other materials on sexuality that will be developed for parents and teenagers.

Developed in private meetings over three years and numerous drafts, the pastoral became the focus of both hope and anxiety in the days leading up to the convention. The secrecy of the bishops in preparing the document added to the drama, feeding speculation about its contents. Weeks before the bishops' hoped-for release date on the first day of convention, the conservative group Episcopalians United had leaked the final two drafts, further heightening the tension and earning them a sharp reprimand from Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning.

Called "Continuing the Dialogue: A Pastoral Study Document of the House of Bishops to the Church as the Church Considers Issues of Human Sexuality," or just "the pastoral" for short, the bishops' document served as a touchstone for all other discussions on sexuality. In a surprisingly congenial debate in the convention's opening day, the bishops agreed to commend the document to the wider church.

Conservative bishops push back

Eighteen bishops from Province 7 (composed of 12 dioceses in the Southwest) arrived at convention with a protest statement, signed by a total of 101 bishops. Their one-page "Affirmation" claimed the pastoral was a substantial departure from traditional biblical Christianity and reaffirmed that the only appropriate context for sexual intimacy is within lifelong, monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

Following adoption of the pastoral study document, another statement emerged written by Bishop John Spong of Newark and signed by 55 bishops present at General Convention. It affirmed sexual orientation as "morally neutral," marriage as an "honorable vocation for some of God's people," and "faithful, monogamous, committed" relationships of gays and lesbians as worthy of honor.

After shoring up the pastoral's language on chastity and marriage and downgrading its status from the "pastoral teaching" mandated by the last convention to a "pastoral study document," the bishops first voted to attach the Province 7 "Affirmation" to the pastoral.

In a debate over whether to attach the Spong document as well as the "Affirmation", the bishops finally commended only the pastoral itself without any additions. The two statements will appear in the convention minutes with the names of those who signed each one.

Who is a 'wholesome example'?

Opinion was split on interpreting the pastoral's final position on the ordination of noncelibate homosexuals, particularly in a set of "Guidelines While We Continue the Dialogue" that commits the bishops to ordain "only persons [they] believe to be a wholesome example to their people." In a press conference, Bishop John MacNaughton of West Texas, one of the signers of the Affirmation, called the bishops' vote a clear statement that the decision to ordain non-celibate homosexuals is not a local option. "The answer was 'No,'" MacNaughton said. "We do not have local option. We have never had local option. I wanted some clarity about that and I got it and I am very satisfied with it."

But Browning responded that he sees the dialogue as continuing and open-ended.

"I don't think there is any clear-cut answer to this," he said in a press conference following the vote on the pastoral. "I think what we have tried to seek is an understanding of where we are on these positions."

In the House of Deputies, the pastoral and the bishops' call for further dialogue were mentioned in almost all other discussions of sexuality, though

the deputies sent the bishops a strongly worded request that they not use the pastoral as an excuse to side-step other sexuality resolutions. While their authorization was not needed to release the pastoral, the deputies joined the bishops in urging the church to study it by approving the resolution setting up a 12-member committee on dialogue on human sexuality that will include both bishops and deputies (B-012/a).

Having approved the pastoral, bishops discharged at least some of the resolutions proposed on sexuality, including several that would have bound clergy by church law to adhere to traditional understandings of sexual behavior. These included resolutions to add canonical prohibitions against blessing same-sex unions or engaging in genital sexual relations outside of marriage. Bishops also discharged a resolution that would have removed "the obstacles to ordination for qualified candidates who are living in committed same-sex relationships."

Blessing same-sex unions an ongoing issue

The bishops did not agree to develop rites for blessing same-sex unions, one of the fundamental issues in the convention's sexuality debate. After two days of debate, they did hammer out a substitute resolution that endorses a study of the theological and pastoral considerations involved in developing "rites honoring love and commitment between persons of the same sex" (C-42/s). The resolution further states that "no rites... be developed unless and until such rites have been authorized by the General Convention." While all liturgies for trial use are subject to General Convention's ratification, Bishop Frank Vest of Southern Virginia pointed out that stating the restriction specifically would allay fears that "we are slipping ahead" of the church on the development of rites blessing same-sex commitments. On the final day of convention, deputies concurred with the bishops with little debate. Deputies and bishops also agreed that gay and lesbian couples need legal rights to domestic benefits, such as health and pension benefits, calling on city councils, state legislatures and the U.S. Congress to approve legislation granting that protection (D-006/a).

In a close vote, deputies did stop short of directing the Church Pension Fund, the primary provider of health insurance to the Episcopal Church, to offer health coverage to unmarried domestic partners.

The Rev. David Jones of El Camino Real explained that his diocese submitted the resolution because it had asked the Pension Fund to include domestic partners but was told General Convention authorization was needed. And E. Kim Byham of Newark argued that consistency with their earlier directive to secular legislatures required taking the same approach within the

church. "This house said we have decided intentionally to enter the dialogue on human sexuality," responded the Rev. Edward S. Little of San Joaquin (California), referring to the deputies' decision to commend the bishops' pastoral. "Yesterday we agreed to talk and today we are moving toward a legislative answer to the issues of human sexuality."

In a ballot by orders, the resolution failed by only a few votes in each order.

Non-discrimination upheld

Two resolutions stressed that the church should not discriminate because of sexual orientation in allowing access to ordination or to the general life of the church.

A highly controversial issue in the past two General Conventions, the changes to the canons passed both houses with relatively little debate. In the first, a sentence will be added ensuring that no one will be barred from access to the ordination process because of "race, color, ethnic origin, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by these canons" (D-007/a).

The same language was lifted for a second, more general statement (C-020/a/s) that says "no member of this church shall be denied access to full participation in the life, worship, and governance of this church" for any of the same reasons.

Deputies concurred with the bishops on a reaffirmation of the 1976 General Convention's statement that "homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection under law with all other citizens" (C-019). The church's Washington Office also was directed to work on behalf of pending or future legislation to assure that protection.

Helping families understand sexuality

A call for educational materials to help families understand and accept children's sexuality and sexual orientation shuttled between the bishops and deputies before finally being approved.

Originally worded to direct the national church's departments of Education for Mission and Ministry and Youth Ministries to prepare materials for gay and lesbian youth and their parents, the resolution (C-026/a) was broadened by the deputies to include all youth. Several deputies argued against the change, pointing out that gay and lesbian youth are several times more likely to commit suicide than other teenagers.

In a sometimes acrimonious debate, bishops wrestled further with the text, leading with a directive that the church "seriously address the issues of

.. youth suicide and runaway/throwaway youth, especially as these result from a conflict over sexuality, sexual identity, and sexual orientation." They also urged congregations and dioceses to use other education materials to assist parents in "caring for their children regardless of whatever their sexuality may be," while still directing the national church offices to develop new materials.

"We all have a common concern for the welfare of youth," said Bishop Steve Charleston of Alaska, expressing some bishops' frustration at the length of a debate that might have forestalled addressing a real threat of youth suicide. The clear discomfort for many bishops throughout, he said, has been concern that the new materials would promote a particular "political agenda." In response, the bishops also passed a mind-of-the-house resolution asking the presiding bishop to ensure that the bishops will have some say in the direction, writing and review of the materials.

Bishop Peter Lee of Virginia urged dioceses and congregations to use materials already available from other sources so that families can get immediate help. "How many children will die before we sit around in Kanuga in two years and look at a document that has been prepared by a two-person staff that is not adequate?" Lee asked. "I would like to challenge our churches to begin now in a way that doesn't subject this to the vagaries of the budget." Human Affairs report won't be distributed

A controversial Blue Book report on including children and homosexuals in the life of the church did not fare as well.

The report of the Standing Commission on Human Affairs addressed the need for the church to recognize and deal with children and youth at risk, and, in a separate section, specifically underscored the needs of children and adults who are gay and lesbian. Deputies voted to distribute the entire report to bishops and youth ministers. After protracted debate on the last day of convention, the bishops decided by a narrow margin to omit the section on gays and lesbians, and then defeated the whole resolution.

94137

Episcopal Church adopts new church laws standardizing rules on clergy misconduct

by David Skidmore

Although the Episcopal Church may be deadlocked over who may be ordained, it is agreed on procedures for handling clergy misconduct. After three years of painstaking work by the Standing Commission on Constitution and Canons (SCCC) and an hour of painful testimony at a General Convention open hearing, bishops and deputies overwhelmingly approved a massive overhaul of the Title IV clergy disciplinary canons.

The new church laws, which go into effect January 1, 1996, provide more uniform and balanced procedures for bringing charges against clergy accused of misconduct, in prosecuting charges, and in protecting the due process rights of both complainants and the accused.

Despite forceful arguments over statutes of limitation on alleged abuse and a controversial provision grandfathering victims who are ineligible to file charges under current canons, bishops and deputies agreed with the majority of revisions proposed in the resolution (A-019/a). The only change was a minor "friendly" amendment by the bishops allowing a vestry to retain a suspended clergy person who is seeking treatment.

Vestries can retain suspended clergy

In the bishops' debate, Bishop David Joslin of Central New York proposed an amendment that would allow a vestry, by two-thirds vote, to ask the ecclesiastical authority to retain their pastoral relationship with a suspended rector.

"What we were concerned about was if someone's going into rehab, the person might continue and come back as the rector, in other cases they would not," explained Bishop Robert Rowley of Northwestern Pennsylvania, a lawyer who was chair of the bishops' canons committee. He accepted the revision as a friendly amendment.

The bishops spent considerable time on an amendment proposed by Bishop William Wantland of Eau Claire (Wisconsin) to delete three paragraphs extending the statute of limitations indefinitely in cases where the victim was a minor at the time of an offense involving sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or physical violence.

"We do have statutes of limitations on everything except capital, criminal offenses," said Wantland. "I think if you do this you open up the

possibility of charges being filed against clergy for events alleged to have occurred years and years ago. All you have to allege is that 'it happened when I was a kid,'" warned Wantland, who is an attorney. "To eliminate statutes of limitation on this kind of situation is conducive to coercion and fraud." "I've seen the other side of the story," countered Bishop Ronald Haines of Washington, whose son Jeffrey has accused a priest in the Diocese of Western North Carolina of sexually abusing him as a child. "The church has a chance to be the church at this point, and I have a new concept of how Title IV might work to be much more of an opportunity for healing."

Wantland's proposal eventually failed, and the bishops added only the single amendment.

Uniform standards created

The Title IV revisions, covering 68 pages in the General Convention Blue Book, revise 18 canons dealing with the type of offenses subject to presentment, the parties allowed to file misconduct charges, the trial of bishops, the role of bishops in presentments, due process rights for complainants and the accused, statutes of limitations, and rules of evidence.

Modeled on the U.S. Armed Forces Uniform Code of Military Conduct, the new canons give clarity and uniformity to a process that in large part was left up to individual dioceses. The old canons, unchanged since their creation in 1915, were intended to deal primarily with issues of heresy and doctrine. Until the 1970s, cases of clergy misconduct "were usually handled privately by the bishops and clergy guilty of misconduct," explained Robert Royce, former chancellor of the Diocese of Long Island and the principal author of the SCCC's resolution.

"We had so much local option that the same set of facts in two different dioceses gave no guidance to either, and we felt that was not appropriate," said Royce. "So we have truly drawn this thing kicking and screaming into the modern era."

What they were looking for, said Bishop Rowley was "a balanced set of canons in which clergy's rights are protected, the interests of the church as a whole are served," and in which victims feel secure in making complaints. The revised canons assure that both victims and alleged abusers will have the right to be present, heard and assisted by an advocate or attorney throughout the process of an ecclesiastical trial. The revision makes it clear that procedures are for use in church trials and not civil or criminal litigation. Members of the committee said they believe the proposed document clarifies the role of a bishop in dealing with sexual-misconduct cases, while maintaining a pastoral role. "As a bishop," Rowley said, "I am very comfortable with the

provisions."

Victims' rights stressed

The SCCC, in consultation with the Executive Council's Committee on Sexual Exploitation, was able to repair most of weaknesses in its resolution. But the cognate committee on canons further refined the measure with 100 amendments focusing principally on statute of limitations, confidentiality provisions, and the rights of victims to select their own counsel.

"It's now a very balanced document," said Sally Johnson, chancellor for the Diocese of Minnesota and the principal author of the cognate committees' amendments. It goes further, she said, in addressing the needs of the congregations, the clergy and the victims.

Johnson admitted that the interests of victims were a primary concern in her changes. Besides expanding the list of persons who can bring charges, by including the spouse and dependent elderly relatives of victims, Johnson also removed time limits on filing sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and physical violence charges if the victim was a minor at the time of the offense. The point was to give more flexibility to a rigid standard based on outmoded understanding of the psychological effects of sexual abuse.

The old canon, she explained, "had an absolute five-year statute of limitations such that if an act had happened five years and one day ago, be it to a four-year old or a 40-year old, no charges could be brought on it." Victims of sexual abuse usually require years of healing "before they have the ego strength or the spiritual strength" to endure a grueling legal process, Johnson said.

The committee learned firsthand how difficult that process can be from several witnesses at its open hearing during convention. Some of the most powerful testimony came from Jeffrey Haines, who related how he had been sexually abused starting at age 8 and continuing until age 20. The alleged offender--the Rev. J. Faulton Hodge of the Diocese of Western North Carolina--was described by Haines as a friend of the family.

An angry Haines, who last month filed a civil suit against Hodge and the Diocese of Western North Carolina, told the committee that all statutes of limitations should be eliminated regarding sexual misconduct charges, and that any priest convicted or admitting to sexual misconduct should be automatically deposed.

"It's unrealistic to believe a child would be able to come forward to say 'I was abused by a priest,'" said Haines. The fact that it has taken Haines until age 32 to be able to address his experience was a major factor in the committee's decision to eliminate the time limits for victims filing charges on

offenses that occurred when they were minors, said Rowley. "That is just not satisfactory in our mind. That's not the way for a church," he said.

An important middle step

Royce pointed out that the committee also addressed the due process rights of clergy. "We wanted to build some protection into the situations so that clergy also have a clear opportunity to understand what we tried to do for their rights and to make sure that they are not abused because of the stress or drama of any particular moment."

Both Johnson and Royce stressed that the changes are not a remedy for misconduct. Johnson described the new canons as "a very important middle step" of a wider process built around clergy wellness efforts like the Church Pension Fund's Cornerstone Project. "This process is designed to help the church respond appropriately to prevent church insurance from ever having to be involved."

Whether or not the convention chose to adopt the new canons, the church would still experience sexual misconduct, said Royce. Eliminating misconduct will require pairing penalties with prevention programs. "What we need is continuing education," he said. "We need continuing clergy wellness to ensure that people are not victimized initially so that these canons don't have to be used. And that is the key for me."

Summary of major changes

The proposed changes to Title IV canons include the following provisions:

- eliminating the statute of limitations for charges involving sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or physical violence if the victim was a minor at the time of the offense, and stating that charges may be filed any time prior to the victim reaching age 25 for other offenses;
- increasing the existing five-year statute of limitations for general misconduct charges to 10 years;
- allowing charges to be filed anytime within three years after a conviction of the accused in a civil or criminal court when the alleged misconduct doesn't involve sexual abuse or exploitation, or physical violence ;
- if the victim doesn't realize or discover the effects of the offense at the time of its occurrence (if offense is not sexual abuse or exploitation, or physical violence) then charges can be filed within 10 years following the offense and within two years of its discovery;
- permitting charges to be filed during a two-and-a-half-year window

--running from the enactment of the enabling resolution to Jan. 1, 1996 when the changes take effect--by complainants whose cases would not meet the filing deadlines in the old canons;

- limiting the authority to issue presentments to standing committees, thereby removing the bishop from this process;
- creating specific guidelines on who may file charges--previously left up to the dioceses to determine--permitting charges to be filed by the victim, parents of the victim, or the victim's spouse or "adult child" [meaning a dependent elderly person]; the vestry of the accused's church; any three priests in the diocese where the accused is canonically resident; any three adult communicants in the accused's diocese; standing committees; or the ecclesiastical authority of a diocese;
- creating the new position of a church advocate, an attorney appointed to assist the victim in understanding the church's disciplinary process, and in preparing a charge, and in pastoral care;
- entitling victims to retain their own counsel or advocate;
- the appointment of an independent prosecutor, or "church attorney," by the ecclesiastical court in each diocese;
- allowing victims to have input during the sentencing of offenders;
- protecting the accused from self-incrimination;
- adding admonition--a less extreme reprimand--as a third option to an ecclesiastical court's sentencing choices, which are currently limited to suspension or deposition;
- setting "clear and convincing evidence" as the test for an ecclesiastical court to reach a conviction, which is a less demanding standard than the current "beyond a reasonable doubt";
- barring chancellors or vice chancellors of a diocese from serving as church advocates or counsels for the complainants; and
- mandating confidentiality during the investigation phase prior to the issue of a presentment.

--David Skidmore is communications officer for the Diocese of Chicago.

94138

Bishops and deputies clash, then concur on women's ordination

by Jeffrey Penn and Michael Barwell

Caught between an attempt to reassure traditionalists of their place in the Episcopal Church and the impatience of those who bristle that women are still denied ordination in a handful of dioceses, the 71st General Convention faced the most serious impasse of its 10-day meeting just hours before it was scheduled to adjourn.

After the dust settled, deputies and bishops adopted resolution C004s/a directing both supporters and opponents of women's ordination to engage in dialogue, while officially recognizing both theological positions for the first time.

In a series of parliamentary skirmishes over two days, the ordination issue simmered in both the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops, threatening to boil over and scorch people on all sides of the issue. The debate was sparked by the disagreement between the bishops and deputies about forcing implementation of an 18-year-old canon on women's ordination. In a lopsided vote by orders, the deputies staunchly defended their belief that the canon (Title III.8.i) guaranteeing access to ordination for both men and women should be implemented and not simply "addressed" as proposed by the bishops.

The shift of emphasis from "addressing" to "implementing" touched off a prickly debate among the bishops, many of whom clearly resented pressure from deputies to force a resolution of the impasse. Clinging to a fragile collegiality crafted during the past three years, the bishops failed to avoid confrontation, and found themselves lost in a thicket of parliamentary maneuvering.

Traditionalists take their gloves off

Frustrations over the issue forced the traditionalist bishops to take their gloves off. "I am deeply offended. I am angry. I feel that I have been misled, betrayed and sold out by a process that's been going on for several days now," said Bishop Coadjutor Jack Iker of Fort Worth, whose consent process was nearly derailed over his opposition to the ordination of women.

Turning to members of the Episcopal Women's Caucus in the gallery, Iker said: "Sisters, I respect you. I love you. I'm willing to dialogue with you and listen to you." But he quickly added, "I am tired of being put down,

called a sexist, and denied the respect as a bishop of this church that I hold a theological position based on scripture and theology, not based on misogyny. "How dare you?" Iker fumed. "What is this dialogue to be about if I'm not to be given an equal footing with you, that I hold a theological conviction as you do? I am tired of being intimidated by a radical feminist agenda for this church." He charged that a dialogue according to the deputies proposal would be "a farce and hoax."

In a moderate but equally determined tone, Bishop Keith Ackerman of Quincy (Illinois) said that the ordination of women was "a litmus test" that threatened his ordination as a bishop last year. Ackerman said that he, too, was "tired of being dictated to and put down," because of his position on the issue. He said that the House of Bishops should be more interested in unity than legislation. "Don't legislate me out," he pleaded.

Bishop William Wantland of Eau Claire charged that the deputies' changes "clearly say to me--and thousands more like me--[that] there is no place in this church, you do not have a legitimate theological position, and the sole purpose of dialogue is to implement what one side has already determined will be universally so." He warned that he and others could be forced to leave the church "as a matter of conscience."

Women's supporters respond

In the face of the growing resolve of the traditionalist statements, bishops who support the ordination of women found themselves caught in their own crisis of conscience.

"I am not drawing a line," said Bishop Douglas Theuner of New Hampshire. "I really believe that my responsibility to all my sisters and brothers is that of love and pastoral care. I also believe that I must act according to my conscience, and that perhaps finally in this event, what I believe to be true is more important than what I believe to be politic."

Bishop Vincent Warner of Olympia went further. "In trying to honor the conscience of others I find myself compromising my own conscience." Although he offered an expression of compassion for traditionalist bishops, Warner said that he would "not walk away from my support of the women of the church whom I stand beside."

As the wrangling escalated, Bishop Jeffery Rowthorn of the Convocation of Churches in Europe drew a comparison between the ethnic cleansing in Serbia and what he said were attempts to impose "doctrinal cleansing" in the House of Bishops.

Expressing the impatience of many bishops who felt cornered by convention debates that leave little "wiggle room," Bishop Robert Moody of

Oklahoma said, "Well, if there's no more wiggle room, then you've got to stand up and be counted." Oblivious to the press of time--and at one point even wondering if the deputies were still in session--the bishops struggled through a forest of amendments, counter-amendments, substitutions and perfections to the deputies' proposal.

Clearly exhausted, and after a dramatic call for prayer by Iker, the bishops amended the deputies' resolution in an effort to satisfy traditionalists who said that they were on the verge of being pushed out of the church. In their amendment to the deputies' resolution, bishops said that both opponents and supporters of the ordination of women to the priesthood "hold a recognized theological position in this church."

Two traditionalist bishops in dioceses that do not ordain women will be appointed by the presidents of both houses to a committee that will continue the dialogue on "how the canon can be implemented in every diocese of the church." [See full text of C004s/a below.]

Deputies amused, but not amused

Waiting for the bishops to complete their debate brought the House of Deputies to a stand-still. Deputies milled about, wandered in and out of the convention hall, chatted with neighbors, and occasionally tossed paper airplanes.

One deputy suggested the bishops be treated like cardinals cloistered to elect a pope." After 10 days, if there is no decision, their meals are reduced to bread and water," he said.

When word finally came from the bishops, the deputies heard one protest on the resolution before voting. The Rev. Ruth A. Meyers of Western Michigan read an impassioned statement that chastised the bishops for failing to assert that "the stated position of this church is that ordination to the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons is equally open to women and men. I am disappointed that after 18 years the bishops are not able to recognize this very basic fact."

But the deputies immediately halted debate and accepted the revisions without comment and promptly adjourned until 1997.

Non-discrimination language approved

In related matters, deputies concurred with the bishops' action to open access to ordination to all without discrimination. Resolution D-007/a assures that no one will be denied access to the selection for ordination because race, color, ethnic origin, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age.

Bishops approved an identical resolution at the 1985 and 1988 General

Conventions, but the resolutions were defeated each time by the lay deputies in a vote by orders.

An amendment to remove "sexual orientation" from the sentence failed. Deputy William Doubleday of New York clarified that sexual orientation did not imply approval of sexual practices. "I would hope that this church would be clear that if it has differences it is around the area of behavior, not around orientation." The concurrence passed without a vote by orders.

Deputies and bishops also passed a resolution using similar language in a more general statement on non-discrimination that says "no member of this church shall be denied access to full participation in the life, worship, and governance of this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by these Canons."

--contributing to this report were Jan Nunley, David Skidmore, Alice Clayton and James Thrall

Full text of Resolution C004s/a:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, the 71st General Convention reaffirms the existing canon, Title III.8.i, guaranteeing both men and women access to the ordination process in this Church and be it further Resolved, This General Convention recognizes that women are not ordained to the priesthood in all dioceses at this time; and be it further Resolved, this General Convention acknowledges that those who support and those who oppose the ordination of women to the priesthood and Episcopate each hold a recognized theological position in this Church. Resolved, That the Presiding Bishop and the President to the House of Deputies, in consultation with two bishops, whom they shall designate, from the dioceses where such ordinations do not occur, appoint a committee to promote dialogue and understanding and to discuss how the canon can be implemented in every diocese of this Church; and be it further Resolved, That the following shall be among the matters discussed: 1. Opportunities for full access for women to the ordination process in this Church; 2. Opportunities for ordained women to carry out their ministries in every diocese of this Church; 3. Opportunities for congregations that desire the ministries of ordained women to have access to them in every diocese; 4. Opportunities for those persons who oppose the ordination of women to have access to the ordination process and to carry out their ministries in every diocese; and be it further Resolved, That this committee shall report to the interim meeting of the House of Bishops in 1995 and subsequently to the Executive Council.

94139

Convention adopts \$131.5 million budget with 'Christ at center of program'

by David Skidmore and Alice Clayton

Brushing aside expressions of pessimism, and determined to support a continuation of missionary work on the national level, the 71st General Convention approved a three-year, \$131.5 million budget that will challenge dioceses to go the extra mile in support of national programs.

Both the deputies and bishops approved the a budget that responds to repeated calls for visible and significant funding for national and world mission responding to Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning's challenge to congregations and dioceses to reach for a larger vision of the church. The budget also provides a new funding formula that is expected to provide relief for dioceses that find it difficult to support national church operations.

"We hope you can see why Program, Budget and Finance (PB&F) feels it has accepted the challenge to change," said Vincent Currie of Central Gulf Coast, chair of the committee, in presenting the budget. "When you accept this challenge, you accept with it the mandate to return to your dioceses and present it to your people there."

Bishop George Hunt of Rhode Island, chair of the PB&F program committee, said that "we've tried to put Christ at the center of this program and budget."

Revised formula approved

One key breakthrough in the budget process was the development of a more equitable funding formula. The revised formula, which proposes a single asking rather than the old two-part apportionment and assessment, offers three options:

- A diocese can calculate the amount it sends to the national church based on the income received from its congregations rather than (as in the past) on the total income received by its congregations from their members. A diocese choosing this option then uses a new formula with five graduated percentage ranges: 16 percent on their first \$500,000, 19 percent for the next \$500,000, 22 percent for the next \$1 million, 25 percent for the next \$2 million, and 20 percent for income over \$4 million.

- As an alternative, a diocese may elect to pay the same amount it paid to the national church in 1994. If it chooses this option, the amount would increase by 3 percent in 1996 and 1997 to account for inflation. (During the past three

years, dioceses paid an apportionment of .0375 percent and a General Convention assessment of .027 percent.)

■ A diocese also has the choice of paying somewhere within a "covenant range" based on the new graduated formula. With this option, dioceses can pay either the lesser, greater, or somewhere between two amounts; the 1994 payment; or what they would pay under the graduated formula. Russell Palmore of Virginia, a member of PB&F, explained that the "current funding system has been in place for 50 years [and is] based on income at the parish level of each diocese." But, he added, in most cases the increase of support to congregations has not been matched by increased giving to dioceses. "It has been a flawed system," Palmore admitted. "I think the church believes it's a flawed system, and this is a response to what we've heard over the last nine years."

Providing some elasticity

"In one sense, every diocese is being asked to pay more because the new formula provides a new top number and bottom number," Hunt said of the revised funding formula. "That's to give the dioceses some elasticity. One of the reasons it took so long to come up with this formula was to try to present a more equal asking of each diocese. Some of the dioceses were being asked to give almost 40 percent of their income, while others only had to give 15 percent. The range with the new formula is closer to 20 percent for each diocese," he said.

Hunt also commented during a press conference on the issue of withholding funds as "punishment" for disagreement with church policies or convention actions. Several dioceses announced after the 1991 convention that they would not support the national church, citing continuing controversy over human sexuality.

Most dioceses are working to support both the national church and local ministries, added Hunt. "But when push comes to shove, if you have a hungry person staring you in the face, you vote to feed the person you can see," Hunt said.

Treasurer Ellen Cooke added, "There are three main factors [in the drop in available funds]. One is local economic conditions. The second is the desire to do more ministry on the local and regional level. And the third is, some people were taking positions for and against actions taken or not taken in Phoenix. We hope that won't be true coming out of this convention," Cooke added, "but there is always that possibility."

Will program be supported?

Although General Convention approved the new operating budget, questions about sufficient support from the dioceses persist, especially with issues of sexuality simmering under the surface.

The bishops, after unanimously approving the budget, provided an answer to that question by adopting a mind-of-the-house resolution from Bishop Roger White of Milwaukee. The measure creates a covenant among the bishops "to support the total mission and program of our church" and committing them to encourage their dioceses to support the budget at the top level of the funding plan.

With the presiding bishop now the "point person" in this new spirit of faithful witness, said White, "the church is waiting for us to claim this lead."

White's words were echoed by Bishop Steve Charleston of Alaska, who said the bishops should prove they will do "everything in our power" to encourage their members to give at the maximum level. Similar resolutions also were offered in the House of Deputies, with dozens of clergy and laity signing supportive statements.

Local option in funding?

Though the spirit of White's resolution found general support, several bishops said they could not agree because their dioceses oppose some of the trends in the national church.

Bishop Terence Kelshaw of Rio Grande said his "hands were tied" because of parish autonomy and "the collegiality he owes to the diocese." His diocese has always paid its full apportionment, he noted, "but the fact of the matter is that in my diocese the spirit of local option pervades."

Kelshaw said he will do what he can to encourage participation, but "the parishes will decide if and whether they will contribute to the budget of this church."

Sharing Kelshaw's view, Bishop John Howe of Central Florida said that he sympathized with the resolution but that his diocesan board and convention has insisted on exercising local option in supporting the national church. He also pointed out that division among the bishops over sexuality "is going to have a deleterious effect on giving."

But Charleston challenged their remarks, declaring it unacceptable that bishops should consider their hands tied on the question of supporting the budget. "If I felt that the entire diocesan convention of Alaska opposed the issue of the Gospel of Christ, I would gladly stand alone on that floor. My hands would not be tied when it came to speak the word of truth."

Charleston's statement that "we cannot degenerate as a church in using

money as a pressure tactic and a political football and tool to use against one another" earned wide applause.

Charleston went on to remind the bishops of the consequences of exercising local option. If dioceses withhold their money, Charleston asserted, the result--at least in Alaska--is that they are not punishing political opponents. "You are punishing innocent native people in those villages whose theology may be very much like yours, but who are suffering because the Gospel imperative has been replaced by the political imperative." he said. "Of that we should be ashamed."

Challenge giving also approved

Bishops and deputies also approved a new "Challenge Giving Program Fund" to support \$1.12 million in programs not in the budget adopted by the convention.

The challenge giving program assures that any money received above the amount budgeted from the dioceses in 1995--projected at \$27.6 million--would be applied to the following ministries in 1996, up to the following amounts:

Legacy Scholarship Fund Development \$30,000

St. Augustine's, St. Paul's, Voorhees Colleges \$140,000

Cuttington College, Liberia \$450,000

Grant opportunities for Jubilee Ministries and economic, environmental and racial justice \$500,000

Final budget

Among the items in the approved budget are:

- full funding at the 1994 levels for appointed missionaries, Volunteers for Mission and overseas dioceses for the next three years;
- an increase in funding for three historically black Episcopal colleges--St. Augustine's, St. Paul's, and Voorhees colleges--by \$100,000 for each of the three years to \$960,000 a year;
- a grant for \$75,000 a year for three years to the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition (NEAC), as well as an additional \$40,166 each year as a block grant to fund new programs for AIDS education through the provinces or in other ministries;
- full funding for programs focused on Ministry with Children, Youth and Young Adults for the "development of models of ministries" as well as adding new funding for suicide prevention education for families, youth presence at General Convention, and evangelism, for a total of \$1.3 million during the next three years;

- support for a Province 8 intercultural ministry by providing a devolving fund of \$30,000 for each of two years, and \$20,000 for the third year;
- an allotment of \$50,000 for continuing the dialogue on human sexuality using the bishops' pastoral study document;
- an \$800,000 fund to develop a church-wide computer bulletin board service during the triennium.

94140

General Convention fails to agree on moves to restructure church

by Alice Clayton

After three years of listening to a wide range of suggestions about the structure of the church, the 71st General Convention came close to adopting a plan that would respond to grassroots cries for change. In the end, however, bishops and deputies could not agree on the form that change should take. Although deputies hammered out a resolution they thought would move the Episcopal Church closer to restructure, the bishops chose to endorse changes already being implemented at the national level such as reducing staff and reorganizing church program into a single Service, Witness and Education unit with six clusters.

The resolution--which combined nearly half a dozen resolutions on reforming church structures into one--called for the formation of two committees, one to conduct an independent administrative review of structures and the other to organize provincial forums on structural issues.

Price tag is too high

The deputies approved the resolution, but the bishops rejected it for some of the same fears raised by dissenting deputies--that two new committees would further burden an already overburdened structure and the \$75,000 price tag to fund the committees was too high.

The proposed committee for renewal and reform for mission and ministry would have studied the role of the presiding bishop; the function of the Executive Council; the location and role of the national church headquarters and the role, organization and function of provincial synods.

A proposed forum committee would have conducted two national forums to lead the church in dialogue about restructuring for mission, similar to the Shaping Our Future Symposium held in St. Louis in 1993.

Although one deputy called the resolution "a fantastic step forward" that carried out the work of the Partners in Mission Consultation and the Executive Council's diocesan visitations held last year, Deputy Byron Rushing of Massachusetts urged the church to stop talking about structure and to go out and "do mission." He added, "By going out and doing the mission, the structures will come about, because we cannot have a structure that doesn't follow function."

Bishop Robert Tharp of East Tennessee also spoke to the need to get clarity about the church's mission before overhauling its structure. He reminded the bishops of a point raised by Loren Mead at the Shaping Our Future Symposium that "mission becomes structure."

Some structure resolutions made it; some did not

After deputies adopted the omnibus resolution, five other resolutions on structure were discharged. This action prevented debate on resolutions dealing with the reduction in size of the House of Deputies, restriction of the number of resolutions General Convention could consider, holding General Convention every five years instead of three and declaring the Great Commission from Matthew: 28 as the mission of the Episcopal Church.

Structure resolutions making it to the floor for debate received mixed reviews. Deputies and bishops soundly defeated the Executive Council proposal to study reorganizing the General Convention from a bicameral legislative body into a unicameral body. As in past conventions, deputies and bishops agreed that the time was not right to move the Episcopal Church Center out of New York.

The convention did, however, vote to reduce the presiding bishop's term from 12 years to nine, beginning at the close of the 1997 General Convention with the new presiding bishop. And it approved the division of the Diocese of Michigan into two dioceses.

Structural changes reflected in new budget

Heeding the hue and cry to provide a new way of asking dioceses for national program funding, the convention adopted a single asking plan which offers dioceses the option of calculating the amount they send to the national church for program based on income actually received from congregations. In the past the asking was based on the total income from congregations. (See separate story on budget).

Passage of the budget also responded to concerns that the Episcopal Church was moving away from its commitment to foreign mission. The final budget restored full funding for appointed missionaries and Volunteers for Mission for the next three years and added a line item designated for "mission opportunities." Although not funded for 1995, \$407,831 would be available in 1996 and \$1,280,792 in 1997 for racial and ethnic scholarships, funds for black colleges and Cuttington College in Liberia and grants for Jubilee Ministries and other social justice concerns.

Full funding of \$800,000 was also restored for the development of a church-wide computer bulletin board service using the InterAnglican Network known as Quest, which may prove to have a profound effect on the way the church communicates in the future. In a budget hearing, Betty Gray, editor for the New York-based *Associated Parishes* and a volunteer on the convention telecommunications team, said that "Quest is not just a communications tool, it's also a tool for ministry."

--Alice Clayton is communications officer for the Diocese of East Tennessee.

94141

General Convention grapples with wide range of international issues

by David Skidmore

Despite an obvious focus on internal issues of sexuality, women's ordination and the budget, the General Convention spent considerable time examining and affirming the church's role as an international peacemaker, determined to keep faith with Anglicans in trouble spots around the world.

A day after concurring with the deputies on a resolution backing a single standard of justice for Palestinians and Israelis, the House of Bishops balked at endorsing a comprehensive set of anti-discrimination guidelines and affirmative action principles for companies operating in Northern Ireland, and was mute regarding the recent peace overture by the Irish Republican Army. On the final day of convention the bishops sent back to the deputies a resolution (D031/a) supporting peace in Northern Ireland after striking out a

section endorsing the MacBride Principles that had been adopted by the 1988 General Convention. The nine principles call for non-discriminatory hiring and termination procedures, banning "provocative religious and political emblems" from the workplace, creating procedures to recruit and promote minority employees, and encouraging investment in Northern Ireland.

Though the clock ran out for bishops to consider the resolution, the deputies went ahead with a strong statement in support of the MacBride Principles. Deputy Byron Rushing of Massachusetts argued that the vote at least put the deputies on record in support of efforts by the Church of Ireland's Archbishop Robin Eames and Presiding Bishop Browning to bring justice to a country riven by religious prejudice.

Single standard of justice endorsed

The convention did act more decisively regarding Israeli-Palestinian relations by affirming the Israeli-Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) September 1993 Declaration of Principles, declaring that a durable peace process depended on the U.S. State Department adhering to "a single standard of justice" for both Israel and the PLO.

In passing resolution A-103/a, the convention urged the U.S. government to require Palestinians and Israelis to renounce violence as a terror tactic and method of civilian control as a condition for receiving aid and loan guarantees. In carefully balanced language, the resolution called on Palestinian police "to make every effort to apprehend violators" and on Israel to release all Palestinian political prisoners and detainees.

Another resolution (D-065/a) recognized Israeli settlements in Gaza, West Bank, and East Jerusalem as illegal and obstacles to peace. The actions came a day after a delegation of five Jewish leaders urged the bishops to keep dialogues between their two faiths free of "political polemics." Dr. Leon Klenicki of the Anti-defamation League of B'nai Brith warned the bishops that several resolutions before the convention could "represent an unfortunate continuation" of past disputes between Jewish groups and the Episcopal Church over Israeli-Palestinian relations. Dialogue between the two faiths would be enhanced, said Klenicki if the Episcopal Church avoided such unilateral actions and attempted to feel out Jewish positions before drafting legislation. A starting point for future dialogue, he added, might be the "introspection and inner renewal" model of Yom Kippur.

In contrast, Bishop Samir Kafity, president-bishop of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, had only praise for the Episcopal Church's role in the Middle East. Kafity lauded the efforts of Presiding Bishop Browning and his wife Patti on behalf of Palestinians in a speech

before the bishops. "We were encouraged and strengthened by their repeated pastoral visits that came to us during a time of suffering and agony," he said.

Kafity also praised the 50 diocesan bishops who "came to us as pastors" during the intifada uprising in Gaza and the West Bank. This "mission of compassion" also led to expanding the bilateral Anglican-Jewish dialogue to a trilateral process that includes Muslim representatives. This only makes sense, said Kafity, given that 30 percent of the Middle East is Muslim. "We come from the same roots," he added "and share the same objectives of peace and hope."

'A mountaintop experience'

At an evening forum, Archbishop Desmond Tutu thanked Episcopalians for their efforts in helping dismantle apartheid. With apartheid vanquished and a democratic government in place, the time has come for reinvestment in South Africa, he said.

Tutu described South Africa's elections this spring as a spiritual turning point and "mountain top experience." The elections both restored the dignity of blacks and lifted centuries of guilt from whites, said Tutu. "We went into the voting booth one person and came out a different person."

The convention also paid attention to other trouble spots in the world, including the Cuban and Haitian embargoes, the Philippine insurgency, the Korean-Japanese dispute over war crimes reparations, and the civil war in Rwanda. From 1983 to 1993 the church maintained a united front in boycotting South Africa over apartheid, but in 1994 it is split over whether to lift or continue the embargo on Cuba. By a narrow margin (410 to 369), the deputies rejected a resolution (A-099/a) urging the U.S. government to lift the embargo and remove restrictions on travel between the United States and Cuba. A later move by the deputies to reconsider the measure failed.

Those arguing for lifting the embargo cited the hardships it has brought to the Cuban people.

"People have suffered tremendously over the past 30 years," said Diana Frade, wife of Bishop Leopold Frade of Honduras. "What we have imposed on the Cuban people is not working," she added. "What we need to do is begin relationship with Cuba so that people can stay on their island instead of trying to get off."

However deputies from Florida prevailed in arguing against lifting the embargo because it would remove all incentive for political reform, said Manuel Mesa of Southeast Florida. "The American people ask for the lifting of the embargo, but they never ask Castro to lift the embargo he has put on the people in Cuba," he said.

Support for other issues

The convention also called for ending military aid to the Philippines, took a firm stand on Japan paying war crimes reparations, and pledged support for the people of Rwanda.

Both houses approved a resolution (D-129/a) urging a negotiated settlement to the tribal bloodbath in Rwanda. The vote followed a plea from Archbishop Nshamihigo Shyira, primate of the Episcopal Church of the Province of Rwanda, in a letter to the House of Bishops.

In his letter, Shyira pleaded with the bishops to urge the U.S. government to help broker a political solution to the strife between the majority Hutu and minority Tutsi peoples. The international community's response with food and medical aid has been a God-send, but the ultimate cure for this tragedy lies in the political arena, he said. Luring Rwandans back to their homeland with humanitarian assistance without a political solution in place or in progress, he said, exposes them to reprisals.

Japanese war crimes during World War II was the focal point of intense debate in both houses over a measure (D-008) condemning the Japanese Imperial Army's exploitation of Korean women as sex slaves. The church also went on record supporting an end to U.S. military aid to the Philippines and supporting reduction and restructuring of the Philippine debt to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The resolution (A-097/a) calls for ending military aid to the Philippines as a way to discourage the "total war" strategy of the Philippine government against insurgents.

--David Skidmore is communications officer for the Diocese of Chicago.

94142

Convention addresses a litany of civil rights and social needs

by James Thrall

Determined to embody the Baptismal Covenant's pledge to seek justice and respect the dignity of every human being, deputies and bishops at the 71st General Convention adopted a litany of resolutions that addressed civil rights

and social needs.

A resolution on prayer in the public schools ignited a spark of controversy early in the convention. Bishops and deputies agreed that states considering laws that would permit "moments of silence" in their public schools should consider carefully the Constitution's protection of freedom of religion. Passing over a resolution that expressed support for states that allow prayer or time for silent reflection in public schools, the deputies narrowly adopted a substitute resolution (D-090/s) that urges "all state legislatures considering 'moment of silence' statutes for public schools to assure constitutional balance in their treatment of this issue by carefully considering the First Amendment's free exercise clause as well as its establishment clause."

The establishment clause states that "Congress will make no law respecting the establishment of religion," while the free exercise clause adds "or restricting the free exercise thereof."

G. Ralph Spence Jr. of Montana, the deputy who proposed the original resolution, argued that moments of silence are "not necessarily to promote our own beliefs, but to promote values and beliefs in general to our youth as good things to have."

But deputies from Utah told of how their children are discriminated against as religious minorities in their state. "I come from a state that is dominated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints," said the Rev. Caryl A. Marsh. "It isn't just a matter of prayer. It is a matter of how you pray and the posture you use."

"Even a moment of silence could present our children with great discomfort," agreed the Rev. Canon Bradley S. Wirth, also of Utah. Bishops concurred with the deputies' action with little debate.

Women have right to access to abortions

Deputies and bishops took care of unfinished business from the 1991 General Convention when they expressed the Episcopal Church's "unequivocal opposition" to any action by local, state or national government to "abridge the right of a woman to reach an informed decision about the termination of pregnancy," or to "limit the access of a woman to safe means of acting on her decision" (A-054/s).

A resolution with the same wording was adopted by the deputies of the 70th General Convention in Phoenix in 1991 and sent to the House of Bishops for concurrence. The bishops amended the resolution, which meant the deputies had to consider it again. The convention adjourned before the deputies could take a final vote on the changed resolution.

Several deputies at this General Convention stressed that the resolution was not addressing the issue of abortion itself. The Episcopal Church's position on abortion, stated in an action of the 69th General Convention in 1988, opposes abortion as a means of "birth control, family planning, sex selection, or any reason of mere convenience." It also declares that the legal right to an abortion exists and should be exercised only in "extreme situations." The current resolution "is simply a corollary of a resolution that was adopted two conventions ago," explained one deputy. This time the resolution did make it to the other house in time for concurrence.

Health issues supported

Convention also commended the work of pregnancy care centers "which stress unconditional love and acceptance for women and their unborn children," thereby helping to accomplish the will of the 1988 General Convention resolution on abortion to "assist those faced with problem pregnancy" (D-105/a).

The deputies and bishops also urged government funding for a variety of women's health issues, including domestic violence, AIDS, heart disease, cancer, contraception and maternity care (A-055). Deputies amended the resolution by removing "contragestives"--an abortion inducing technique--from the list.

While sidestepping political implications from the current national health care debate, the convention issued a strong call for universal health care. The resolution (A-057/a) states that everyone should have access to quality, cost-effective health care services, and that that care should include:

- preventative medicine;
- physiological, spiritual, psychological and social components insuring the care of the whole person; and
- balanced distribution of resources, leaving no region of the country underserved.

The convention also addressed health care issues in amending a resolution of the last General Convention concerning the prolongation of life to endorse palliative treatment to relieve the pain of terminally ill people (A-056).

Convention endorses civil rights for homosexuals

Bishops and deputies sent a strong message to secular legislative bodies to protect the legal rights of gay and lesbian couples to health care and other benefits.

After lengthy debate, the bishops concurred with the deputies that the church should support civil legislation that entitles gay and lesbian couples to

bereavement and family leave policies, health benefits, pension benefits, real estate tax benefits, and "commitments to mutual support enjoyed by non-gay married couples" (D-006/a).

Bishop Richard Shimpfky of El Camino Real (California) stressed that the issue was not about church issues--such as ordination of homosexuals or blessing of same-sex relationships--but about civil rights for minority populations. "This General Convention has never on been record in opposing civil rights issues," he said.

Convention also reaffirmed the 1976 resolution recognizing that homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection under the law, and directing the church's Washington Office to support legislation on this issue (C-019/s). Deputies narrowly defeated a resolution, however, that would have urged the Episcopal Church's Pension Fund to offer health insurance coverage for unmarried domestic partners. The Church Pension Fund is the primary provider of health insurance to the Episcopal Church.

The Rev. David Jones of El Camino Real explained that his diocese submitted the resolution because it had asked the Pension Fund to cover domestic partners, but was told General Convention authorization was needed. E. Kim Byham of Newark asserted that, given their directive to secular legislatures on civil rights, the deputies would be inconsistent if it did not require the same of itself.

The Rev. Edward S. Little of San Joaquin (California) argued in response, however, that approving the resolution contradicted the deputies intention to continue in dialogue on human sexuality without resorting to legislative answers.

Environment

Recycling bins dotted the convention site, making protection of the environment a background theme of the convention. Free airplane tickets were raffled to encourage their use.

Approved resolutions addressing environmental concerns will:

- fund the work of the Environmental Stewardship Team for the next three years (A-041);
- direct the church's Social Responsibility in Investment Committee to screen all investments for environmentally responsible behavior both inside and outside the United States (A-042/a);
- direct all future General Conventions to be models of environmental stewardship, and when possible to implement the following: provide recycling centers for paper, glass, cans and plastics; use ceramic or glass cups instead of paper or plastic ones; use both sides of a sheet of paper for photocopying; and

- use only recycled paper and non-toxic dyes in printing (A-044/a);
- recognize rapid population growth as a threat to political and economic stability and as a danger to the environment (D-009/a).

AIDS/HIV support

In a variety of actions, the General Convention expressed strong support for continued ministry to those affected by the AIDS/HIV epidemic. Based on a recommendation from the structure committee, the Joint Commission on AIDS was replaced by a committee of Executive Council that will be responsible for the oversight, evaluation, and strategic planning of the national AIDS ministry program in collaboration with the many partners of AIDS ministry.

Other actions will encourage educational programs in dioceses and provinces, support the work of the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition (NEAC), and support the concept of a meeting of worldwide religious leaders to develop a "universal religious statement on AIDS/HIV" at the 50th anniversary of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1995. Bishops and deputies pledged that "as a church we will work to affirm the necessity of accessible drug treatment, needle access, safe-sex programs, and the affirmation of monogamy in all sexual relationships" in response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic (A-003). The resolution also acknowledges "our own inability to seek repentance of our prejudices that make a direct contribution to the spread of HIV/AIDS."

Other actions

- Other actions addressing domestic issues committed the church to:
- urge the U.S. government to reformulate its refugee policy to apply it in a uniform and equitable manner without regard to the nationality, race or creed of those seeking refugee status (A-101/a);
 - oppose violence, and especially domestic violence (D-005/a);
 - urge a moratorium on the construction of "maximum control unit" prisons criticized by Amnesty International as violating the United Nations' rules for treatment of prisoners ((D-010)
 - make prison ministries a priority by designating the suffragan bishop for the armed forces as national liaison (D-035/a);
 - urge provinces and dioceses to develop programs of literacy, citizenship, voter registration and advocacy to counteract violations of civil rights of immigrants (D-132/a).

--James Thrall is communications officer for the Diocese of Connecticut

94143

Bishops, deputies reflect on sin of racism

by Alice Clayton

Deputies and bishops at the 71st General Convention renewed their pledge to fight against the sin of racism, a campaign kindled at the last convention in Phoenix.

The issue of racism came to the forefront of the 70th General Convention when organizers--amid the protests of many--decided to hold General Convention in Phoenix. At the time, Arizona was the only state in the nation without an official holiday honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.

Using as a basis the bishops' 1994 "Pastoral Letter on the Sin of Racism," nearly 100 discussion groups responded to three questions provided to spark dialogue: In what ways is racism a sin; How does the pastoral letter help identify my experience of racism; and What can I do to recognize and confront racism when I encounter it?

Mandated by the 1991 convention, the Pastoral Letter was issued this spring to be read or published in every congregation. The bishops identified racism as more than personal prejudice, and concluded that racism is a structural, institutional problem.

Personal and poignant

The small-group discussions following daily worship services were personal and poignant.

"I was hit by the water hoses. I lived it. I remember it," said Essie Johnson, a deputy from East Tennessee who marched with Martin Luther King, Jr., while a student at Tuskegee University. "What I find to be a real sin is when the color of my skin is considered before the content of my character," she said. For many at Johnson's table, the sin of racism centered around failing to see the person behind the race or ethnic group.

"For me, the sin of racism is that blindness which fails to recognize the creation of God in the people around us," said the Very Rev. George Werner, deputy from Pittsburgh.

The Rev. Duncan Gray III, a deputy from Mississippi, said that for him the goal of eliminating racism is something that might be unrealistic. "As I look deep within myself, it is naive of me to think I'm going to eliminate something that has been poured into my culture for thousands of years. I would rather talk about penance and grace. Saying I'm not a racist is like saying I have no sin," Gray said.

The Rev. Brian Thom, a deputy from Idaho, agreed with Gray. "By

denying [our racism] we participate in it. We in the Episcopal Church certainly cannot exonerate ourselves from the problem," he said.

Other "isms" emerge

Another "ism" emerged from the experience of one speaker at the table. Fran Bernardin, delegate from Northwestern Pennsylvania to the women's triennial gathering, recalled the time when she, as a female engineer, was denied seating at a restaurant because of her gender.

"When the [pastoral] letter was read, the first thing I thought was that you could put in the word 'sexism' in place of racism," Bernardin said. Sexism was addressed in a separate joint session of the House of Bishops, the House of Deputies and the Episcopal Church Women.

In Phoenix, the bishops, deputies and women delegates participated in and heard the results of a survey on racial attitudes. The 1991 convention also added a civil rights martyr--seminarian Jonathan Daniels of New Hampshire--to the liturgical calendar, and established the Episcopal Church Legacy Fund, a scholarship fund for minority students.

Bishop Hines honored

More than 700 people gathered on the eve of General Convention for an Episcopal Legacy Fund dinner and to pay tribute to retired Presiding Bishop John C. Hines, who gave decisive leadership to the church during the civil rights era from 1965 to 1974.

What began as an occasion of remembrance and celebration ended up in a bold challenge by Hines, who was widely known for his strong principles and combination of pastoral care and prophetic witness. In a stirring address, Hines urged the church to hold to its principles and said the church's job is to love the world by seeking justice for all.

"Though we revere the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King and honor the person of Bishop Hines, popularity has not been the goal for either of these men," said Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning in response. "They did not craft their actions, or make their decisions, with an eye to winning friends."

Other racism decisions

The convention also approved the following resolutions dealing with racism, committing the church to:

- strengthen recruitment, retention and education of people of color for the ordained ministry in the Episcopal Church (A045);
- urge stronger affirmative action efforts in recruiting people of color on parish vestries, as delegates to diocesan conventions, and as members of

diocesan executive councils. (A-046)

- make overcoming racism an "evangelical priority" in parishes (A048) and urge ongoing anti-racism programs at the parish level (A047);
- continue the Episcopal Legacy Fund (A142);
- commit funds to ministry in ethnic minority communities (B029/s);
- open access to decision-making bodies for Hispanics and other ethnic groups (C008/a); and
- request dioceses to form commissions on racism whose objectives in the next triennium will be to survey the ethnic distribution in congregations and diocesan leadership positions and report to the Executive Council (D135/a).

--Alice Clayton is communications officer for the Diocese of East Tennessee.

94144

Episcopal Church keeps AIDS ministries a priority; offers AIDS quilt to parishes

by James Thrall

In an effort to "bring home" the reality of the AIDS epidemic--and to keep AIDS/HIV ministries a priority--the 71st General Convention gave a strong lift to AIDS programs.

One visible plan will be to display panels from the AIDS Memorial Quilt in local congregations beginning in 1995. The project is joint effort of the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition (NEAC) and the NAMES Project. Representatives of NEAC and the NAMES Project announced the new program in a press conference during the convention. The quilt, begun with a single panel in 1987, has grown to include nearly 28,000 panels showing the names of persons who have died of AIDS. It has been displayed in Washington D.C. four times, as well as in every state in the country, and was displayed at the 1988 General Convention in Detroit.

By hanging a 12 by 12-foot panel of the quilt in their sanctuaries for up to four weeks, Episcopal congregations can "have the experience of living in the presence of the quilt," said NEAC's president, the Rev. Richard Younge. The project, called "Bringing Our Names Home," communicates the impact of

the AIDS crisis by putting a face on the epidemic, presenting congregations with the reality that each victim of AIDS was "a person, someone who lived and breathed," Younge said.

Through NEAC, the Episcopal Church is the first denomination to participate in the interfaith program to provide panels to parishes. The program will be coordinated through the AIDS National Interfaith Network (ANIN).

'These people became real'

Barbara Milton of Alexandria, Virginia, whose son Charles died of AIDS, said that when she spent an hour alone with a section of the quilt displayed in her parish of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church in Springfield, Virginia, she formed an unbreakable bond with the quilt. "These people became real to me," Milton said, "I cared about them and I mourned them. I cared about the people who made the panels."

To ensure that the program does more than merely "hang a piece of fabric in sacred space," NEAC has developed a suggested curriculum and worship materials a congregation can use, said the Rev. Ted Karpf, NEAC's executive director. Congregations involved in a pilot program reported that "these quilts become a part of the parish family," he said. When the panels must be returned, "there is real sorrow because the sense of loss has finally come home."

The NAMES Project receives up to 50 unsolicited panels a week, said Anthony Turney, executive director for the project. It was first displayed in Washington D.C. in 1987 when it contained only 2,000 panels, "in the naive hope that if they were laid out in the nation's capital, there would be such a sense of shame, such a sense of horror, that something would be done about the AIDS epidemic," Turney said. When the quilt is next displayed there in 1996, it probably will contain 50,000 panels.

In the two weeks since the first small announcement about the project appeared in Episcopal Life, 53 parishes and dioceses have requested panels, Karpf reported. To borrow a panel, congregations should write to NEAC explaining why they want to participate in the program, Karpf said. Congregations should allow 120 days to receive a panel.

Funding for AIDS

In addition to the quilt plan, convention also took some significant legislative action on AIDS/HIV.

Based on a recommendation from the structure committee, the Joint Commission on AIDS was replaced by a committee of Executive Council

responsible for the oversight, evaluation, and strategic planning of the national AIDS ministry program in collaboration with the many partners of AIDS ministry. A \$37,000 line item in the national budget for funding the AIDS committee was approved.

The budget also grants \$75,000 a year for three years to NEAC, as well as an additional \$40,166 each year as a block grant to fund new programs for AIDS education, provincial activities and other ministries.

"NEAC, through its network, is viewed as the official AIDS Ministry of the Episcopal Church," said Karpf. "We've been given a great trust which builds on six years of proven effectiveness, fiscal responsibility and responsive ministry."

AIDS/HIV actions

General Convention also approved the following resolutions, which now become church policy, to:

- call upon every diocese, congregation, school or other church organization to begin or continue AIDS/HIV education; urge every congregation make available by 1995 "relevant, nonjudgmental, population-specific" education materials, including the church's teaching on abstinence; and encourage "plain-talking prevention programs" at local, state and national levels (A002a);
- affirm the necessity of programs for drug treatment, needle-exchange, safe sex and affirmation of monogamy in all sexual relationships (A003s);
- support the concept of a meeting of worldwide religious leaders at the 50th anniversary of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1995 adopt a compassionate and nonjudgmental "Universal Religious Statement on AIDS/HIV" (A004a);
- work for increased funding, research, prevention education, services, and human rights initiatives in the battle against AIDS and HIV disease (A005)
- direct the Episcopal Church Center and a variety of organizations to hold a consultation to prepare national and regional programs, and monitor the success of the program and report back to the 72nd convention (A007a); and
- encourage dioceses and congregations to sign the statement "A Commitment on HIV/AIDS by People of Faith, The Council Call" drafted by the Council of National Religious AIDS Networks (B028/a).

94145

Episcopal Church will continue discussion of full communion with other denominations

by David Skidmore

Keeping the Episcopal Church on course toward full communion with other Protestant denominations is an important aspect of ecumenical and interfaith issues, the 71st General Convention decided.

After significant discussion in the House of Bishops, a resolution (A-029s/a) affirmed the Episcopal Church's membership in the Consultation on Church Union (COCU) and directs the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations (SCER) to assist congregations in joint worship and study with other COCU churches. "If the Episcopal Church is going to continue to exercise leadership in the ecumenical movement, we've got to become proactive and less reactive than we have been," said Bishop Edward Jones of Indianapolis. To back off now from the COCU process would be premature, Jones added.

The final resolution commits the church to "continuing open, honest, and candid dialogue" while recognizing that "this church is not ready to enter into covenant communion" as described in COCU's 1988 study document, *Churches in Covenant Communion: The Church of Christ Uniting*.

Serious reservations

In recommending the document to the Anglican Consultative Council for study, the bishops' ecumenical relations committee parted ways with the Blue Book report, which expressed "serious reservations about the theology and polity" of the COCU document.

In its report, the SCER recommended against entering into covenant with COCU churches. But Jones warned the SCER's resolution would send a signal to the COCU churches and "to the wider ecumenical friends [that] we have a certain reserve and unwillingness in the Episcopal Church to continue the dialogue." Bishop Richard Grein of New York said it is time to stop dancing around the issues in COCU. Other denominations have raised questions, he said, and that has not derailed either their involvement in COCU or their bilateral dialogue with the Lutherans.

COCU was formed in 1962 in response to a challenge issued by Dr. Eugene Blake in a sermon at Grace Episcopal Cathedral in San Francisco. Blake, a stated clerk of the United Presbyterian Church, called for American Protestant churches to unite in an ecclesiastical body that would be "truly catholic, truly evangelical, and truly reformed."

Three key questions have guided the Episcopal Church's 30-year involvement in COCU: How would its involvement affect its standing as a province in the Anglican Communion? Are COCU principles consonant with Anglican teaching and the agreed statements of the church's ecumenical dialogues? And should talks aimed at union proceed on a solely national and largely Protestant basis? While keeping the door open to membership in COCU, the convention also urged congregations to study proposals full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in preparation for a final decision in 1997 (A030).

Russian Orthodox delegation visits

An official delegation from the Russian Orthodox Church visited General Convention for the first time. Elena Speranskaya, a lay woman, and Archpriest Victor Petlyuchenko visited Indianapolis at the invitation of Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning. They represent Archbishop Alexy II, patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, spiritual leader to 70 million Russian Orthodox Christians. The Rev. William Norgren, the church's ecumenical officer, and Bishop Roger White of Milwaukee introduced the delegation, explaining that the relationship between the two churches, which began in the 19th century, had been limited since the Russian Revolution of 1918 because of communist suppression. Browning's 1989 visit to the Patriarchate of Russia led to the creation of a small joint coordinating committee to strengthen relations. Norgren said the purpose of the committee is "practical cooperation and dialogue." The committee, which has met twice a year since 1990, has sponsored exchanges of clergy and seminarians, lay persons and a dialogue on the episcopate. Several American dioceses have established relations with Russian dioceses. The dialogue deals with some major differences between the two traditions. "Our church has been disappointed in decisions of your church but if we are going to be together, we each have to sacrifice a little for the sake of the dialogue," Petlyuchenko said. "We believe that the Eucharist is the center of life for Christians. If we understand that together, the rest [of the issues that divide us] are not so important."

Jewish delegation critical

Five Jewish observers, representing Jewish interfaith councils, also addressed the bishops.

In a short address to the bishops, Dr. Leon Klenicki, head of the interfaith department of the Anti-defamation League of B'nai Brith, shared his hope that Episcopalians and Jews might make their dialogues "free of the political polemics that have hampered our interfaith meetings in the past."

Referring to several resolutions before convention dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Klenicki said he and his colleagues were concerned that the resolutions under discussion might "represent an unfortunate continuation" of past disputes.

With Yom Kippur approaching, a Jewish observance centered around "introspection and inner renewal," the two faiths should be looking over their past relations and applying those lessons to their future dialogue, Klenicki said.

The delegation sought to foster better understanding between the Episcopal Church and Jewish communities, explained retired Bishop David Reed of Kentucky. Two representatives of the Islamic Society of North America had planned to appear with the Jewish representatives, he said, but had to cancel because they needed to prepare for their national assembly.

A resolution (A102/a) urging congregations to enter into dialogue with American Jews and Muslims also was approved by convention. Other ecumenical actions In other action, convention reaffirmed a decision of the 1985 General Convention to remove the filioque clause from the Nicene Creed at the next revision of the Book of Common Prayer. (A028/a) The filioque clause, literally meaning "and the son," refers to a statement of faith in the Nicene Creed that the Holy Spirit is manifested through both the Father and the Son. It was added to the creed at the Third Council of Toledo in 589 A.D. Disputes over the clause contributed to the split between eastern Orthodox and western Catholic churches in 1054 and complicated more recent discussions with Orthodox churches.

94146

Viva la Provincia Anglicana de México!

by Jan Nunley

To thunderous applause, the Episcopal Church gave birth during the General Convention to a new autonomous province of the Anglican Communion--the Anglican Church in Mexico.

Members of the House of Bishops rose as one to approve the establishment of the new province, incorporating the five dioceses of Mexico:

Western Mexico, Northern Mexico, Mexico, Cuernavaca and Southeastern Mexico. Immediately following the vote, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning was presented with a new "mitre"--a large Mexican sombrero.

"The time has come to take our own place in the Anglican Communion, the larger family," Bishop Sergio Carranza-Gomez of the Diocese of Mexico told the bishops, expressing his gratitude for "the support you have given us, for your tender care, for your leadership, for your friendship, for your love. Please keep us in your prayers." From the Diocese of Western Mexico, Bishop Samuel Espinoza added, "We are in the same boat--you are in first class, we are in second or third class, but we are in the same boat--the mission of Christ." Several bishops rose to hail the new province. Bishop Maurice Benitez of Texas, who chaired the covenant committee establishing the autonomous church, recalled how the Mexican representatives began with "apprehension" and moved to "determination and enthusiasm" over the prospect of independence. Quoting a resolution by the Mexican church, Benitez said, "En el futuro no como madre y hija, pero como dos hermanas trabajando juntos por Cristo y su Reina (In the future, we will not be mother and daughter, but two sisters working together for Christ and his reign)!"

Others from dioceses waiting to become autonomous provinces expressed hope that they would soon follow Mexico into independent status. "I would like this house to support us when Central America comes back too," said Bishop Martin Barahona of El Salvador, in an impassioned address in Spanish.

"Being autonomous does not mean isolation, but companions in mission," commented Bishop Cornelius Wilson of Costa Rica, whose diocese is extra-provincial diocese to the Episcopal Church, hopes to join the new Province of Central America when it is formed. Bishop Clarence Coleridge of Connecticut also offered congratulations to Mexico and encouragement to the dioceses hoping to form a Province of the Caribbean--a process that the Diocese of Connecticut is involved in shepherding.

Resolutions supporting autonomy for Central America and the Caribbean have already passed the House of Deputies and await the approval of the House of Bishops. Both resolutions recommend a three-year wait before granting autonomy.

From the tiny Diocese of Taiwan, now part of the Episcopal Church's Province 8, Bishop John Chien recounted failed efforts to unite with the Provinces of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia, adding, "By God's grace and your support we hope we will become autonomous in the near future."

The new Province of Mexico will install its Primate no later than

January 1, 1995.

--Jan Nunley is a freelance writer in Rhode Island and a reporter for National Public Radio.

94147

Election results of General Convention posted

Elections for a number of Episcopal Church leadership positions were completed at the 71st General Convention. The following persons will serve:

Board of Trustees of the Church Pension Fund

The Rt. Rev. Maurice M. Benitez of Texas
Mr. John H. Biggs of New York
The Rev. Earl H. Brill of North Carolina
John K. Cannon, Esq., of Michigan
Mr. Matthew K. Chew of Arizona
Ms. Betty Connelly of Louisiana
Mr. William S. Craddock of West Tennessee
Ms. Amy L. Domini of Massachusetts
The Rev. Chilton Knudsen of Chicago
Mr. Arthur Kusumoto of Hawaii
Ms. Diane Pollard of New York
The Rev. Robert M. Wainwright of Rochester

Joint Nominating Committee to Elect a Presiding Bishop

Province I

The Rev. Ann S. Coburn of Connecticut
Canon Jean Mulligan of New Hampshire
The Rt. Rev. Barbara Harris of Massachusetts

Province II

The Very Rev. William H. Petersen, of Bexley Hall Seminary, Rochester, N.Y.
Ms. Diane Pollard of New York
The Rt. Rev. William Burrill of Rochester

Province III

The Rev. Rosemary Sullivan of Virginia

Mr. Russell V. Palmore, Jr. of Virginia
The Rt. Rev. A. Heath Light of Southwest Virginia

Province IV

The Rev. Barnum McCarty of Florida
Mrs. Scott Evans of North Carolina
The Rt. Rev. Calvin O. Schofield of Southeast Florida

Province V

The Rev. Virginia A. Brown-Nolan of Chicago
Ms. Katherine Tyler Scott of Indianapolis
The Rt. Rev. Frank C. Gray of Northern Indiana

Province VI

The Ven. Philip C. Allen of Minnesota
Ms. Sherry Maule of South Dakota
The Rt. Rev. Sanford Z.K. Hampton, suffragan of Minnesota

Province VII

The Rev. Rayford B. High, Jr. of Texas
Ms. Cynthia H. Schwab of West Missouri
The Rt. Rev. William E. Smalley of Kansas

Province VIII

The Rev. Caryl Marsh of Utah
Ms. Rebecca Snow of Alaska
The Rt. Rev. Robert L. Ladehoff of Oregon

Province IX

The Rev. Julio E. Murray of Panama
Ms. Thelma Wilson of Nicaragua
The Rt. Rev. Leopold Frade of Honduras

[Note: The House of Deputies has approved addition of two youth representatives to be appointed as voting members of the nominating committee. The bishops have not yet considered the addition of the youth.]

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94148

Forums inspire convention to stand with those who suffer

by Alice Clayton

As deputies and bishops traveled down the 71st General Convention's 10-day path of legislative process they stopped along the way at wellsprings of inspiration. Three forum speakers--the Rev. Henri Nouwen, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Marian Wright Edelman--challenged the church to examine itself as a community and to step out boldly in national and international affairs. In the first of the convention's evening forums, Nouwen, a Roman Catholic priest and well-known author, urged an attentive crowd of 2,000 people to live compassionately in community by standing with those who suffer.

"Community is a quality of heart that doesn't exclude anyone -- because it's the heart of Christ, the heart of God," Nouwen said. "Community is a place where we nurture one another and our relation with Christ, where we forgive one another and come together around the Word and sacraments." Nouwen's words reverberated throughout the remaining days of the convention, cropping up in resolutions, floor debates and Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning's address to a joint session of the bishops, deputies and delegates to the Episcopal Church Women's Triennial.

Tutu declares victory over apartheid

In a resounding open forum address, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, primate of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa and 1984 Nobel peace prize laureate, brought nearly 3,000 people to their feet, applauding and cheering the end of apartheid and the establishment of a national unity government in South Africa.

Noting that much had changed in South Africa since he had last addressed the General Convention in New Orleans in 1983, Tutu said he returned on behalf of millions to say "thank you."

"We have won a victory over a horrendous evil," Tutu cheered, "and we enlisted you in support for our struggle. You gave enthusiastically and generously, and supported our calls for sanctions and boycotts. Apartheid has been vanquished and you have shared in that glorious victory. It is a wonderful privilege to come back and say 'We made it.'"

Tutu said the miracle of the new South Africa could become a paradigm for other trouble spots in the world, such as Bosnia, Somalia and

Rwanda. "If the nightmare of apartheid could end, there is no nightmare that cannot end," he said. "Somalia will end. Bosnia will end. And someday you will become friendly to Cuba," he said, subtly tweaking his audience to press for changes in U.S. policy toward Cuba.

Tutu insisted that "the moral issue of foreign debt" remained a significant concern for the healing of South Africa and many developing countries in the world. Drawing on the Hebrew concept of the year of jubilee--the seven-year cycle in which all debts were canceled and land restored to its original owners--he suggested a moratorium on foreign debt payments.

Edelman calls church to be 'moral locomotive'

Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, called the church to action on behalf of society's youngest members. The church, she said, has "to be the moral locomotive in saying it's time to care for children." For too long the religious community has been "the moral caboose," Edelman contended.

A cease-fire in the "war against America's children" requires "the strong, sustained and faithful leadership of the religious community," said Edelman. She also encouraged every congregation to keep doors open to kids: to host tutoring, recreation and meals programs after school, on weekends and through summer vacations. "Who says Vacation Bible School has to be one week?" she asked. "Why don't we make it eight weeks?"

Browning praised Edelman as "probably the most challenging person I have heard at this convention. She's called the church to wake up to the tragedy of so many lives. She has poured oil on an already simmering fire, and the flame is really going now."

--Alice Clayton is communications officer for the Diocese of East Tennessee.

94149

Worship service honors women's ministries

by Barbara Ogilby and Virginia Nagel

More than 6,000 people attending the 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church flowed into the Hoosier Dome on Sunday morning, August 28, to celebrate the Eucharist and honor the ministries of lay and ordained women. In a setting more commonly used for football and basketball games, bishops, deputies, and visitors worshiped God in a service that was both traditional and innovative.

Text for the liturgy was a combination of the Rite 2 service from the Book of Common Prayer and Supplemental Liturgical Texts that include the phrase, "You made us in your image, male and female," and compare the love of God for humanity to a mother's love for her children.

A highlight of the service was the Ingathering of the United Thank Offering, founded by Ida Soule in 1889 to raise money for missionary work. Diocesan representatives presented their offerings to Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning, celebrant at the Eucharist.

A Litany of Women's Ministries, written for the service by the Rev. Dr. Ruth A. Meyers, celebrated the work of Soule and other women, known and unknown, who were "steadfast in the faith, bearing witness to God's love." Among the women remembered were Pocahontas, one of the first Native Americans converted to the Anglican Church; Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman, "liberators and prophets" in the struggle of African-Americans for freedom; the 11 women deacons ordained to the priesthood in Philadelphia in 1974; women who serve on parish altar guilds and teach Sunday school; and women working in business, government and the arts.

Participants in the service honored in the litany included the concelebrants, the Rt. Rev. Barbara Harris of Massachusetts, first woman bishop in the Anglican Communion; and the Very Rev. Martha Horne of Virginia Theological Seminary, first dean and president of an Episcopal seminary. Also recognized was the preacher for the service, Pamela Chinnis, president of the House of Deputies.

Chinnis addresses women's challenges

In her sermon, Chinnis celebrated the long and varied ministries of women and addressed the issue of divisiveness within the church. She presented a balanced exposition of the three Scripture readings for the day, offering a closely reasoned comparison of the teaching of Jesus with the

seemingly revolutionary understanding of the Scriptures which has led to the extraordinary changes of the status of women in the Episcopal Church. She emphasized that, even today, many feel caught between "the decisiveness of law and the adaptability of love."

Chinnis noted that many people in the church today worry that "we may be adding to, or taking away," from the commandments of the Lord, contrary to the charge Moses gave to the Israelites on their journey. But Jesus, she said, "neither made a god of tradition nor dismissed it as irrelevant," but rather "used the whole of tradition as a guide for living in the here and now." For us today as for Jesus, said Chinnis, this means that we must look below the surface of apparent conflicts for the core meaning, the point of unity, between opposites which seem irreconcilable. The emergence of women from the "shadows of institutional life" to join in the full life and ministry of the church is a case in point, she said.

Chinnis labeled the conflict over the role of women in the church as "deep and long-lasting," noting that for centuries the church has been nurtured by "a near-invisible female workforce" doing much of the real work under the direction of male clergy and vestrymen. "Even the money often came from women," she said, "beginning with those who provided for Jesus and his companions out of their own means."

Chinnis added that for 50 years, laywomen were denied seats in the House of Deputies, a condition which finally ended in 1970 when the Constitution of the Episcopal Church was changed to permit them to be seated. Six years later, the General Convention authorized the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate.

"We are on the way," she said, "but we have not yet arrived."

-- Barbara Ogilby is director of communication in the Diocese of Pennsylvania and Virginia Nagel is editor of The Deaf Episcopalian.

94150

Convention adds saints to Church Calendar, endorses changes in liturgy, worship

Adding several post-Reformation saints to the Calendar of the Church Year produced a brief but heated debate among the bishops during the 71st General Convention. The decision was one of many minor liturgical changes enacted in Indianapolis.

Challenging the appropriateness of a resolution (A-078/a) from the Standing Commission on Liturgy, some bishops sharply contested the inclusion of Ignatius of Loyola, 16th-century founder of the Roman Catholic Jesuit order. Bishops Martin Townsend of Easton (Maryland) and William Wantland of Eau Claire (Wisconsin) questioned the commission's rationale for including Ignatius because of his association with the counter-Reformation.

"I share a discomfort with including in the national universal calendar post-Reformation Romans, Orthodox or Protestants," Wantland said. While it makes sense to allow dioceses to recognize in their own calendars post-Reformation saints, he added, "I personally have some real problems with Martin Luther."

Bishop Frank Griswold of Chicago, chair of the liturgy commission, said Ignatius actually represented "the best, and not the worst of the counter-Reformation." Ignatius is worthy of addition, Griswold said, because of the spiritual exercises he developed which "are increasingly being used today by Anglicans." Ignatius "placed high value on personal freedom and developed a doctrine or discipline of discernment which honors the movements of the spirit in our lives in a very free way," said Griswold. "I think he has been wrongly caricatured as a kind of lockstep absolutist."

Along with Ignatius, the convention proposed adding the following saints to the Episcopal calendar for trial use through 1997: Martin Luther; German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer; Julia Chester Emery, missionary and founder of the United Thank Offering; Alexander Crummell, African-American priest; Paul Jones, former bishop of Utah; mystic Hildegard of Bingen; and 12th-century martyr Thomas Becket.

Other liturgical decisions

Convention also approved the following resolutions on liturgy, the Prayer Book and worship, which:

- authorize the Standing Liturgical Commission to initiate the process, and recommend a time table, for revision of the Book of Common Prayer by the

year 2006 (A051);

- commend for study and evaluation and authorize use of the six-week "Daily Eucharistic Lectionary" for the weeks from the Baptism of Christ to Lent and Pentecost to Advent (A070/a);

- authorize readings and psalms for the "Revised Common Lectionary" for trial use, study and evaluation during the next three years (A072);

- add a retirement/transition rite to the Book of Occasional Services (A073);

- adopt guidelines and procedures for continuing alteration of the calendar of the Episcopal Church (A074/a);

- change the collect for Clement of Alexandria (A075);

- direct the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to continue to distribute liturgical resources which raise up racial and cultural diversity (A081/a);

- direct the Standing Commission on Church Music to continue preparing supplements to the 1982 Hymnal (A089/a);

- direct the Standing Liturgical Commission to study ways in which the liturgical forms of worship may teach and proclaim the offering of both alms and oblations as constituting the people's offering at the Eucharist (A121);

- call for "appropriate liturgical commemorations" on the 50th anniversary of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima, Japan, which coincides with the Feast of the Transfiguration; and recommitting the church to work toward abolishing nuclear war (B008/a);

- direct the Standing Commission on Church Music and the Church Pension Fund to continue researching a more flexible copyright license for musical materials published by the Church Pension Fund (B-025);

- reaffirm the decision of the 1985 General Convention to remove the filioque ("and the Son") clause from the third paragraph of the Nicene Creed (D056/a) in the next revision of the Book of Common Prayer;

- amend Title III, Canon 3, Section 5 to allow the Sacrament to be taken following Sunday or regularly scheduled celebrations of the Eucharist to members of a congregation unable to be present at the Eucharist due to illness or infirmity (D001/a); and

- call for the church to commemorate the second millennium since Christ's birth with the Jubilee 2000 program which commits the church to implementing biblical imperatives of debt forgiveness, faithful stewardship and human liberation (D029).

94151

Teens will join committee to nominate next presiding bishop

by James Thrall

In an action by the 71st General Convention that embraced youth and pointed the church toward the future, two teenagers will serve on the committee to nominate candidates for presiding bishop.

The Joint Nominating Committee for the Election of the Presiding Bishop, elected at this convention, is composed of a lay person, a clergy member, and a bishop from each of the nine provinces. The committee is charged to propose candidates for the next presiding bishop who will be elected at the 1997 General Convention in Philadelphia.

Youth representatives at the General Convention originally pushed for one youth member from each province to be appointed to the nominating committee.

That proposal was changed because it would add nine members to a committee that already numbers 27, explained the Very Rev. H. Scott Kirby, chair of the committee on committees and commissions.
Church of tomorrow

"We've all been moved and delighted by the presence of our young people at this convention," Kirby said in presenting the substitute resolution (D-134/s), calling youth "the church of today and tomorrow."

The Rev. William Doubleday of New York argued against the resolution, saying, "It seems to me that the time commitment, the confidentiality requirements and the expense of youth members of this committee make it highly unfeasible. There must be some other way of securing youth input into this process." "My presence at a special convention at South Bend of this house [Deputies] began my association with this august body 26 years ago," countered Howard F. Gondree of Western New York. "Had it not been for youth presence at that convention, perhaps my ministry would have been dramatically changed."

An effort to amend the resolution to make the youth "consultants" rather than members failed in the House of Deputies, so the youth will have full voice and vote on the committee. The two youth will be appointed by the president of the House of Deputies, in consultation with the youth representation at the convention.

With the vote adopting the resolution, applause erupted from the youth representation, echoed by applause from the House of Deputies. "Do you all

recognize the youth?" asked the Rev. Barnum McCarty, vice president of the house, at the sound of their applause. "There they are." According to a statement from the youth representatives, read by a deputy after the vote, youth members are necessary if the committee is to "represent the views of the church in its entirety."

The statement continued, "the youth of the church must be able to voice their opinions on all aspects of the church, as well as be included in all decision." Sceola Marie Wesley, 17, of Pennsylvania, who authored the statement, said, "You can't gain experience unless you give us a chance to have experience." Because the presiding bishop serves for such a long time, the committee will be nominating candidates for "a bishop that is going to be basically our bishop," Wesley added. "We're the future, so I think we should be allowed to decide on our future church, because it is our church."

In a related action, the General Convention agreed to reduce presiding bishop's term from 12 to nine years (A-130). The decision was based on a recommendation of the Standing Commission on the Structure of the Church to reduce the term "because of the increasing workload and pressures on the presiding bishop." The canon becomes effective at the close of the 1997 General Convention.

--James Thrall is director of communication for the Diocese of Connecticut.

Following are the persons elected to the Joint Nominating Committee to Elect a presiding bishop:

Joint Nominating Committee to Elect a Presiding Bishop

Province I

The Rev. Ann S. Coburn of Connecticut
Canon Jean Mulligan of New Hampshire
The Rt. Rev. Barbara Harris of Massachusetts

Province II

The Very Rev. William H. Petersen, of Bexley Hall Seminary, Rochester, N.Y.
Ms. Diane Pollard of New York
The Rt. Rev. William Burrill of Rochester

Province III

The Rev. Rosemary Sullivan of Virginia
Mr. Russell V. Palmore, Jr. of Virginia

The Rt. Rev. A. Heath Light of Southwest Virginia

Province IV

The Rev. Barnum McCarty of Florida

Mrs. Scott Evans of North Carolina

The Rt. Rev. Calvin O. Schofield of Southeast Florida

Province V

The Rev. Virginia A. Brown-Nolan of Chicago

Ms. Katherine Tyler Scott of Indianapolis

The Rt. Rev. Frank C. Gray of Northern Indiana

Province VI

The Ven. Philip C. Allen of Minnesota

Ms. Sherry Maule of South Dakota

The Rt. Rev. Sanford Z.K. Hampton, suffragan of Minnesota

Province VII

The Rev. Rayford B. High, Jr. of Texas

Ms. Cynthia H. Schwab of West Missouri

The Rt. Rev. William E. Smalley of Kansas

Province VIII

The Rev. Caryl Marsh of Utah

Ms. Rebecca Snow of Alaska

The Rt. Rev. Robert L. Ladehoff of Oregon

Province IX

The Rev. Julio E. Murray of Panama

Ms. Thelma Wilson of Nicaragua

The Rt. Rev. Leopold Frade of Honduras

94152

Convention participants say church must do more to overcome sexism

Confessions of admitted sexists and stories of pain from victims of sexism brought home the cost of a male-dominated world during a panel discussion and national teleconference presented to the 71st General Convention and the Episcopal Church Women's Triennial meeting. The

program, entitled "A Vision of Wholeness: Overcoming Sexism" was sponsored by the Triennial in response to suggestions emerging from the Triennial's successful forum on racism at the 1991 General Convention. Attended by more than 3,000 people--bishops, clergy and lay deputies, delegates to the Triennial and visitors--the session was videotaped for later distribution. Moderated by Pamela Chinnis, president of the House of Deputies, the panel featured the Rev. Alison Cheek, director of feminist theology studies at Episcopal Divinity School and one of the first 11 irregularly ordained women; Bishop Robert Johnson of Western North Carolina; the Rev. Carmen Guerrero, coordinator of Hispanic ministries in the Diocese of Los Angeles; the Hon. Byron Rushing of Massachusetts, first lay chaplain of the House of Deputies; and Ginny Doctor, missionary in the Diocese of Alaska.

Episcopal Church has made progress

"Sexism is moving in from the periphery of our corporate consciousness," said Chinnis, who noted that in 1976 there were only 120 lay women in the House of Deputies and none in the House of Bishops. Today, she said, "there are nearly 300 lay and clergywomen among the deputies, and three women in the House of Bishops."

Chinnis, who has moved from presiding over the Triennial meeting to election as the first woman president of the General Convention, is herself an example of significant progress in the church toward "dismantling the legal barriers that kept women out of the governance and ordained ministry of the church," she said. Nevertheless, she added, there is far to go, both within the Episcopal Church and in the world beyond.

Violence against women and children lies at the core of sexism, said the Rev. Alison Cheek, the first panelist. Such physical, emotional and psychological violence cuts across racial, ethnic and class lines and must be stamped out at both the institutional and personal level, she said. Although Cheek did not blame any one source for perpetuating sexism, she used her own life to discuss how society conditions both men and women to believe sexist myths about each other.

Because the church plays a major role in socialization, Cheek urged the church to examine the theological questions of sexism. "In our history there have been patriarchal traditions that undergird sexism, and there have been unpatriarchal traditions that bring life and liberation," she said. "We have to ask if our theologies enable violence against women and children or do they interrupt such practices?"

Social origins of sexism

Guerrero, an outspoken advocate for Asian, black, indigenous and Latina women of the Episcopal Church, described the devastating impact of sexism which she has experienced as an Hispanic priest and woman of color.

"As I grow older," Guerrero said, "and begin to acquire more experience in life and the church, it is more and more difficult for me as a Hispanic woman to distinguish between racism and sexism. I want very much to believe that no one is intentionally sexist, but it is still very real, very operative in the church." This is most evident, she said, when conscious or unconscious attempts to control others result in gender-related oppression.

Guerrero said sexism in the church is not concerned with "who gets to open the door." Rather, "sexism is about ensuring that the door either remains shut, or only gives the illusion of being open." Sexism, she said, "is about rendering some human beings voiceless."

When women are isolated from decision-making on church staffs and are degraded by men for asking to be included in the process, added Guerrero, "that's a real slap in the face... It may not be literal, physical abuse but it nevertheless guarantees exclusion and oppression."

"Here we are again to talk about another 'ism,'" said Doctor. "Last time racism, this time sexism. When is it going to stop?" she asked. Looking to her traditional Native American teachings is one way Doctor says she deals with life in a sexist world. "If something from another culture works better, then borrow it and use it," she advised. "The Creator had reason for making people different and giving them different gifts... It is time for us to stop hiding behind our cultures and to create a new energy."

Doctor also called for sexists--whether intentional or not--to confess it as sin and learn to change. "You may not confess this before the multitude, but admit it to yourself and then ask, 'Do I want to change?' Some of you may not want to change, and that's fine and well. If you want to change, then commit yourself and find others who share the same commitment."

Browning calls for equity

In closing remarks, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning called on the bishops to raise the church's consciousness of sexism and to work diligently to promote the calling of women clergy.

"I think when there are vacancies in congregations, bishops of this church have a deep responsibility to make certain that women are included in the search process for every vacancy in the church," said Browning.

Equity also applies to the appointment of lay women to national and diocesan staffs. "All too often I think we have seen the church turn to lay

men," Browning added.

Browning said that during the past nine years 96 bishops have been consecrated, but only three have been women, noting that institutional sexism is evident in the church's liturgy.

"When I consecrated Barbara Harris, Jane Dixon and Mary Adelia McLeod, I realized the sexist language that is in that service," Browning said. "And I say to you, on the issue of sexism, that at every level of this institution we need to be intentional about making a change so that what we have said here today might become a reality."

94153

Bishop's cancer brings outpouring of grace

by Jan Nunley

In January 1994, barely a year after his consecration as bishop of Western Massachusetts, Robert Denig went to his doctor for what he thought might be arthritis in his hip. In April the word came back: multiple myeloma, stage two. Sixty percent of his bone marrow was cancerous. The 48-year-old bishop says, "I thought my life was over. I felt like a man on Death Row."

Today, after a full course of chemotherapy and a lot of prayer later, Robert Denig's cancer can't be found.

The soft-spoken bishop thanked the House of Bishops in an emotional speech that brought his colleagues enthusiastically to their feet and prompted Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning to call it "the highlight of the convention."

Denig recounted the many cards, letters and phone calls he has received from bishops and other Episcopalians around the country as evidence of the "grace" he has experienced since he was first diagnosed. "I got beautiful notes from Jack Spong [the liberal bishop of the Diocese of Newark] and Ed MacBurney [the conservative retired bishop of the Diocese of Quincy] on the same day, both of them pouring out their hearts to me and pledging their prayers," he told the bishops. "And one of the things that occurred to me was--oh yes, oh yes, that which unites us is truly profound and far deeper than whatever it is that divides us."

Confirmands lend a healing hand

One of the most moving events of these past few months happened shortly after he found out about the cancer. "On the first Sunday that I had a visitation after my diagnosis had been announced to the diocese, right after I laid hands on and confirmed about 15 young people and adults, the rector of the parish said to me, 'Bishop, would it be okay with you if the confirmands laid hands on you now?' And I said 'Absolutely.'"

That experience, said Denig, "began a trend which has now spread throughout the diocese. I have not made a single visitation since April without, as soon as I'm done laying hands on all the confirmands, all the confirmands and often other parishioners--sometimes the entire congregation--coming around and laying hands on me."

"We can talk about sharing ministry and empowering for ministry until we're blue in the face," said Denig, "but when those who have just been equipped by the Holy Spirit for ministry turn right around and minister to their minister, then we know what the power of the Holy Spirit is really about."

Another bone marrow examination in late July revealed that the cancer--if it's still there--is at "such minuscule levels that the tests just can't even pick it up," reports Denig. News of that spread quickly from parish to press, reaching around the world. Denig told the bishops he has received many calls asking him if he believes in miracles.

"My response to that has been I absolutely believe in miracles, but I want to be really clear about that," said the bishop. "The miracle that I believe in is not necessarily what's going on inside of my body--God only knows what's going on inside of my body. The real miracle is the incredible outpouring of love and support and prayer along with the miracle of the best possible medical skills." He added that the miracle of whatever is happening in his body is "the outward and visible sign."

Denig encouraged his colleagues "not to be so afraid of our weaknesses and our brokenness, either individually or as a house. It could well be that it's precisely in our weakness and our brokenness that God wants to work."

94154

Convention embraces youth delegation in legislative process

by Alice Clayton

Eighteen young people prowled the corridors talking with deputies and bishops, attending hearings and forums and even addressed both houses of the 71st General Convention. And when they left, the youth carried home with them a promise that they would be welcome again -- and that they would help choose the next presiding bishop.

"Through the years, I have come to value the importance given to young people in the Episcopal Church," Bertha Colindres of Nicaragua told the bishops. "I entered the youth group four years ago and have felt supported by members of the congregations which helped in my learning about autonomy in the dioceses of the Ninth Province," she said.

Christopher Williams, Jr., of Missouri spoke to the House of Deputies about the importance of youth and adults working together to solve problems in the church. "Based on personal experience, young people can work together with adults. I saw it happening in New York in April (at a pre-convention meeting), and it happens with my youth group in Missouri," he said.

Youth join political process

The General Convention adopted several resolutions allowing youth a place in the governmental process of the church. Two teenagers will have full voice and vote on the committee to nominate candidates for presiding bishop. While the youth representation hoped for more members on the nominating committee, they were "extremely ecstatic" about the results of the vote, according to 16-year-old Valaida Wynn of New Jersey. "A better thing couldn't have happened to the Episcopal Church."

Passage of another resolution allowed the Youth Presence seat and voice but not voting rights at future General Conventions. The convention assured their attendance at those conventions by allocating \$60,000 over the triennium to support them at General Convention. The teenagers were absent when the vote was taken because money was not available for them to stay for the full 10 days.

Convention addresses youth at risk

In one of the evening forums, Marian Wright Edelman, founder and

president of the Children's Defense Fund, brought the needs of children and youth to the forefront with graphic stories and statistics.

"Homicide is now the third leading cause of death among children five to 14 years old, the second leading cause of death among youths and young adults 10 to 24 and the leading cause among black male teens," Edelman said.

Despite their concerns over youth at risk, bishops and deputies could not come to an agreement about distributing a report from the Standing Commission on Human Affairs dealing with risks to children because of a controversial section on sexual orientation.

Other resolutions concerning youth which were adopted include:

- appropriating \$50,000 for the Standing Commission on Evangelism and the youth ministries cluster to develop evangelism training materials for high-school and college-age youth; and
- calling on the U.S. Senate to ratify the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child which recognizes that children have needs and human rights beyond basic concepts of protection.

--Alice Clayton is communications officer for the Diocese of East Tennessee.

94155

Philadelphia service celebrates 20th anniversary of women's ordination

by James Solheim

Almost a thousand people jammed Cathedral Church of Our Savior in Philadelphia on July 29 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the first ordination of women to the priesthood in the Episcopal Church.

Eight of the women ordained in that historic service at Church of the Advocate across town from the cathedral were present on the occasion, as well as a range of ecumenical guests and dozens of women who were ordained after the church's General Convention finally approved the ordination of women to the priesthood in 1976.

"Wouldn't it be great if the whole family could celebrate what Pamela Darling in her book calls 'breaching the sacred barriers'" Bishop Barbara

Harris said in her sermon. She participated in the 1974 service and was elected the first woman bishop in the Anglican Communion in 1988.

Harris pointed out that, four months after her election as a bishop, conservatives in the church said that "the final crisis of the Episcopal Church is upon us." She said that, as Christians, "you either believe the Pentecost or you don't." The 2,000 people who attended the ordination service in 1974 "saw God doing a new thing." The problem with traditionalists who continue to oppose the ordination of women to the priesthood is "with the messengers--not the message." It is as if they could "vote out of order what God had already decreed in order," Harris chided.

Adding a sober note, Harris said that "even as we celebrate, our struggle continues, and much remains to be done. But what remains lies within ourselves."

Pointing to other churches in the Anglican Communion where the struggle continues and some still argue that the ordination of women must be tested, Harris said, "As a servant of the most high God I don't feel provisional." She contended that "the church has been changed forever." And she argued that "we must recapture and reclaim the term 'traditionalist,' even if it may mean saying goodbye to selective traditionalists."

"I felt is something like this weren't done, we'd still be studying women's ordination today," commented the Very Rev. Jack Hardwick, dean of the cathedral.

The anniversary service was sponsored by Women of Faith Celebrate, a task force of the Metropolitan Christian Council of Philadelphia, as part of a weekend forum where a wide range of workshops examined the impact of ordination on the lives of women in several churches.

94156

Relief agencies struggle with fallout of Rwandan conflict

by Jack Donovan

As relief workers struggle with chaos and violence in the refugee camps of Tanzania and Zaire and prepare for possible conflict in neighboring Burundi, church relief organizations are working to establish a stable base

through which to provide aid to the shattered people of Rwanda.

Katerina Whitley, director of public relations for the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, said, "The situation remains horrendous. Although another catastrophe will come along and take the headlines to another place, we will have money coming into Rwanda for years to help rebuild devastated lives." Whitley said grants were pending, but the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief was waiting on a situation report from the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund in Canada. The Anglican Church in Canada is coordinating relief efforts for the Anglican Communion because they are able to communicate most readily with the Rwandans, who speak french.

Robert Shropshire, development coordinator for Africa/Middle East for the Primate's fund in Canada, said that assistance was reaching the most needy thanks to a partnership between "lead agencies like the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation in the north, and implementing agencies composed of local church groups and international relief agencies at the sites of crisis." Shropshire said that "Rwandan society is polarized and implementation of church programs would begin there only after the needs of reconciliation were addressed."

From January 1993 until the present, the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief sent a total of \$320,616 for aid to victims of the conflict in Rwanda. Of that amount, \$181,467 was sent since the start of the violence in April, 1994, providing food, medicine, blankets, clothes and orphan care.

Local response strong

Whitley said the response of the local church people in Tanzania and Zaire and Rwanda has been tremendous. "All the houses of church people are full of refugees. And this is where the continuing relationship with the churches in Rwanda and other countries is so important because we need to work with them if we are going to provide assistance to the most needy," she said. In Zaire, for example, successful relief efforts are linked with the African Community Initiatives Support Team, a program run jointly by a team of Rwandan refugees from both major ethnic groups, including an Anglican bishop, and the English head of a community health institute in Zaire.

In Rwanda, the situation is complicated by reports that the churches there played a role in the killings. According to World Council of Churches deputy director Samuel Isaac, who returned recently from a fact-finding mission, conversations with government officials and church members emphasized that "the church itself stands tainted, not by passive indifference, but by errors of commission as well."

Aid still needed

The Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief is accepting applications for medical workers and french-speaking psychological counselors who have experience dealing with victims of violence. In addition, the relief agencies are still seeking nurses, doctors and public health specialists who have expertise with on-going, crisis-created nutritional problems and maternal/child health restoration.

The Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief is still seeking contributions to ease the suffering in the refugee camps. Those wishing to send money should designate their contributions to "Rwandan refugees" and send them to the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, the Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

--Jack Donovan is communications assistant for the Episcopal News Service.

94157

Presiding Bishop joins religious leaders at White House breakfast with Clinton

by James Solheim

Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning joined a dozen religious leaders at a White House breakfast with President Bill Clinton August 9 and was able to share with him some of the major concerns facing the Episcopal Church.

In a letter he prepared for the occasion, and in his remarks to the President and the other participants, Browning emphasized the importance of the United States in world affairs means that he is "often asked by overseas church partners" in the Anglican Communion "to represent their concerns to my government."

In addition to international concerns, Browning said that "the Episcopal Church stands four-square behind a health plan that provides universal access and comprehensive benefits" as a key element in its commitment to "the dignity of every human being--which we affirm and serve in our baptismal covenant."

"The main theme of our conversation was the role of religion in the public arena," Browning said in an interview after the breakfast meeting. "It was a very diverse group of people, a clear demonstration of Clinton's eagerness to listen to a wide range of ideas." For example, another participant was Prof. Stephen Carter, an Episcopalian whose book on "The Culture of Disbelief" has stimulated a great deal of discussion in both religious and government circles.

Higher moral vision

The presiding bishop, who sat on one side of the President while conservative Roman Catholic author Michael Novak sat on the other side, said that the meeting had no political agenda but was a free-wheeling discussion. "There was general sympathy for the office and its tremendous burdens," Browning said. "But there were some signs that the evangelicals in the meeting were disenchanted with some elements of the early agenda of the Clinton Administration. Most of us encouraged the President to pursue his higher moral vision," he said.

"I told Clinton how moved I was by the obvious values displayed in his acceptance speech the night he was elected," Browning added. "And I observed how hard it must be to maintain that posture in the face of severe criticism--how so many policies are based on self-interest that we often lose sight of higher values." The President told the group that the tendency in the press to ride a single issue was inducing cynicism in those who are serving in the government, according to the presiding bishop. One participant told the President that he had the opportunity, if not the obligation, to create and strengthen the moral bonds that hold the nation together.

"I think all of us left with an appreciation for the President's energy and ability to express himself," Browning said. "And I think we are prepared to encourage him in his attempt to articulate the spiritual, moral values that shaped our nation," Browning concluded. "He seemed very open to continuing that important conversation."

94158

Haines family stands behind son filing suit alleging sexual abuse

By Frances Antonucci Beard

At a recent press conference in Washington, D.C., Bishop Ronald Haines of the Diocese of Washington and his wife Mary stood behind their son as he announced his lawsuit alleging sexual abuse while he was a minor. The press conference held at a downtown D.C. law office, was organized by Survivor Connections, Inc., a support organization for victims of abuse.

Surrounded by photographs of himself at age eight, a grim-faced Jeffrey Haines, now 34, told reporters, "Beginning in 1968 when I was eight years old, I was repeatedly sexually abused by a priest named Faulton Hodge in the Diocese of Western North Carolina. This sexual abuse continued through the time I was 20 years old."

Jeffrey Haines said Faulton Hodge robbed him of his childhood. "I was raised to trust the church and those in authority within it. However, I have been betrayed and the sacred bond between the church and a member of its congregation has been broken," he said.

A devastating betrayal

In a supporting statement prepared by himself and his wife, Ronald Haines said, "The betrayal by one we thought to be a family friend has been devastating. Jeffrey has struggled mightily to connect severed strands in his life. Our son was made to feel ashamed and guilty before God by an adult whom he admired. That abusive action foisted onto an unsuspecting youth has extracted a great price in terms of spiritual, psychological, physical pain."

In a statement released today, Bishop Robert H. Johnson of the Diocese of Western North Carolina also remarked on the emotional toll exacted by the allegations: "The very filing of these charges and the agony that many will have to endure casts a pall upon much of our church life. I would be less than honest if I denied the distress this causes me, but I believe that the truth will indeed set us free. We must seek that truth, face it, accept it [and] live with it....We will do all we can to make sure that our churches are safe places for all people at all times." Hodge was an active layman in the community before he entered seminary in 1970, returning to the diocese in 1972 to serve parishes until his retirement in 1987. One of his alleged victims came forward and on July 30 filed his own suit against Hodge.

The Haines' expressed pride in their son and support for his action in

filing both a civil suit and a criminal complaint. The legal action is necessary, Jeffrey Haines said, because the church and its leaders offered him "nothing but lip service." Jeffrey confronted Bishop Johnson and his chancellor, or legal advisor, with his allegations last February and met with diocesan officials in May.

"From the time Jeffrey Haines and his attorneys first came to me several months ago the diocese has attempted to be responsive to him. We have been in touch with him, listened to his story and started our own investigation of his accusations against Faulton Hodge. We have been open to receive all of the information that he and his attorneys have been willing to give us," Bishop Johnson said in his statement.

Challenge to church

Jeffrey said that over 15 months of investigation he has discovered other victims of Hodge. He charges that both retired Bishop Weinbauer and Bishop Johnson "had received information that Faulton Hodge was engaging in sex with parishioners" but have taken no apparent action. "I challenge them to stand before these cameras, the people of the Episcopal Church and God and deny these charges," Jeffrey told reporters.

Ronald and Mary Haines said they were told about their son's sexual abuse last year. "It was a devastating revelation but as a family we made the decision to take responsible action," they said.

Bishop Johnson told his diocese, "Our feelings and hearts go out to Ron and Mary Haines, to Jeffrey Haines, to Faulton Hodge, to the people of Holy Communion Parish, Glendale Springs, and to the people of St. Francis' Parish, Rutherfordton, as we contemplate this very disturbing issue." During an interview, Jeffrey said that his struggle has been a long and very difficult one, going from victim to survivor. As a result of his abuse, he was deeply alienated from his own family, a situation he is attempting to repair with therapeutic help. "I have sincerely tried to resolve this matter privately and in an amicable manner since February 1994. The Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Western North Carolina have failed me again."

Jeffrey thinks his case might receive more attention because he is the son of a bishop.

--Frances Antonucci Beard is director of communications for the Diocese of Washington.

94159

Conference aims to work with media on violence

by Jack Donovan

By satellite downlink, participating Episcopal cathedrals will use the video medium to discuss the message of graphic violence on television, advertising and in computer games.

The Violence in the Media teleconference, airing October 19, will examine research on the effects of media violence and discuss ways individuals can influence media content. The teleconference is an interfaith project organized by the United Methodist Teleconference Connection (UMTC) and involving the Episcopal Cathedral Teleconferencing Network (ECTN).

Shirley Struchen, teleconference coordinator at the United Methodist Teleconference Connection (UMTC), said there was good news for those who would like to see a reduction in the portrayal of violence in the media. "The media is taking the problem seriously now and we're beginning to see change. One of the goals of the conference is to emphasize these positive changes and to explore ways to work in partnership with the media."

Struchen cited the Minneapolis television station WCCO as an example of broadcasters who recognize a problem with the prevalence of graphic violence. "On WCCO the news department is changing the way they report violence--you get the same information but it now their policy to not show the video clips of corpses and the blood."

Other signs that the media is concerned about the problem, Struchen noted, are reports that cable and network television have funded studies of violence in the media for 1995, and some video games manufacturers are voluntarily rating their products for violent content.

Advocating media literacy

Struchen said the conference will explore ways that people can make a difference while avoiding censorship and mass boycott. "We want to work with the media to get them to say there is too much violence. One of the ways is media literacy. People are becoming aware that they just can't let their guard down. They have to be responsible for reading about what's coming and following up by sending their commendations and concerns to the broadcasters."

Violence in the Media, now scheduled at 70 sites in 30 states, will feature a panel of guests in the studio, pre-recorded video segments, and a

two-way audio question-and-answer period with audiences assembled at downlink sites. Panel members will include Elizabeth Thoman, executive director of the Center for Media Literacy; Dr. George Gerbner, professor and Dean Emeritus of the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania; Ramona Pence, teacher of the Young Children's Program at James Madison University; and Bernard Keels, United Methodist pastor and host of the Baltimore radio program "Taking It to the Streets."

Violence in the Media will be broadcast on Wednesday, October 19, 1994, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. (ET). Churches interested in becoming a downlink site should contact Shirley Struchen at the United Methodist Communications office, (212) 663-8900.



news briefs

94160

Presiding bishop supports non-discrimination act

Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning recently submitted written testimony in support of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act under consideration by a Senate committee. The statement said, "In 1976, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church adopted Resolution A-71, expressing its conviction that homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection of the laws with all other citizens and calling upon society to ensure that such protection be provided in actuality. The Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 1994 explicitly fulfills that mandate, and I urge members of Congress to move swiftly to pass the bill, and the President to sign it into law." Browning said his support of the act reflected more than his standing as presiding bishop. "It represents my deep, personal belief in the intrinsic dignity of all God's children."

Diocese of Southern Virginia sells disputed property

The Diocese of Southern Virginia recently resolved a three-year property disagreement with the rector and former members of St. Luke's Church in Richmond by selling the disputed property to the Episcopal Missionary Church (EMC). The former rector, Bishop Leo Combes of the EMC, and 30 members of the church disassociated themselves from the Episcopal Church in 1992. At the time of their departure, they sought to claim legal ownership of the church building. The diocese was forced to defend its claim of ownership against the EMC's legal action. Finally, the diocese offered to sell the property to the EMC congregation and a price was negotiated. "The Executive Board, the chancellor, and I believed this would be a grace-filled thing for us to do," said Bishop Frank H. Vest, Jr. of Southern Virginia. "We wanted them to be able to continue to worship in that

place where many of their members had belonged for their entire lives. However, it would have been erroneous and a disservice to the Episcopal Church to allow the impression that they had a right to that property. The canons are quite explicit and it was important that the canons be affirmed. We wish them well in their future life and ministry as a congregation," the bishop said.

Tutu criticizes new South African government

Archbishop Desmond Tutu publicly criticized South Africa's new democratic government recently, denouncing the continuing involvement in international arms trading, a recent vote to significantly increase salaries for members of Parliament, and the decision to omit opening prayers at parliamentary sessions. On the arms trade, Tutu said the church's policy was that South Africa's armaments industry should be "liquidated and dismantled. It is appalling to know that it is South African arms which have been used in Rwanda and the Sudan." Tutu also criticized the Parliament's decision to give itself pay raises, saying he was "deeply disappointed that one of the first actions of the new Parliament was to vote themselves those large salaries . . . They cannot with any integrity and credibility ask the unions to moderate their claims for higher pay. They have set a bad example." Finally, Tutu expressed dismay at the replacement of parliamentary opening prayers with a moment of silence. "The new practice is a cop-out which I condemn strongly. People could still observe their reverent silence as prayers were offered by ministers of different faiths by rotation."

NCC appeals for dialogue between U.S. and Cuba

The National Council of Churches (NCC) recently made a dual appeal to the U.S. and Cuban governments urging actions that may ease the hardships and "the accumulated frustration" of the Cuban people, which have in recent days swelled the numbers of Cubans fleeing their country, despite changes in U.S. immigration policy aimed at discouraging mass exodus. In the August 25 statement, the NCC points to Cuban "economic errors" and calls on the Cuban government to "allow more economic and political improvements," especially "liberalization of policies toward agricultural workers thus increasing basic food production." The statement also said that "successive U.S. administrations also bear responsibility for the current incidents by maintaining the embargo and by placing pre-conditions for dialogue."

People

Maria Campbell was recently appointed executive assistant to the rector of Trinity Church, Wall Street in New York City. Campbell was executive vice president and general counsel of AmSouth Bancorporation and AmSouth Bank of Alabama. She was chancellor of the Diocese of Alabama, a member of the diocesan council, treasurer and chair of the diocese's department of finance and a deputy to the General Convention in 1985, 1988, and 1991. She is a member of the General Convention Standing Commission on Constitution and Canons. "It is a joy to welcome Maria Campbell to the staff of Trinity Parish," said Dr. Daniel Paul Matthews, rector of Trinity. "Maria comes to us from a long and successful career in banking and the law. She also joins us as a distinguished local and national lay leader."

Peter M. Branch was recently elected president of the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES). Branch, who is headmaster at Holland Hall School in Tulsa, Oklahoma, has been an NAES board member for three years. He served as vice-president, chaired the strategic planning committee, and edited the first "Guide for Religious Education in Episcopal Schools." He is a communicant at Trinity Episcopal Church, Tulsa, has been a delegate to a number of diocesan conventions and serves on the diocesan committee on dismantling racism.



news features

94161

Excerpts from the presiding bishop's address during a report of the Executive Council to the 71st General Convention

Henri Nouwen talked about community being a quality of heart. And then, in speaking of these next days, he urged us to "take a few risks with your heart." And that is what I am going to do now. I am going to take a few risks with my heart when I say these next things to you.

My friends, I have participated in the Executive Council process that brought us to this place, with the budget proposals that you have before you. It has been a faithful process and a process that has integrity. But I am not happy about where we find ourselves. The proposed program and budget go to the absolute extreme in cutting our mission together. The dioceses don't send them off to "some place else." There is no some place else -- and there is no someone else. This is just us.

The money that comes from the parishes to the dioceses and from the dioceses into our national church is for what we want to do together because we are the church together, because we are a community, because we are stronger together, because together we have greater wisdom about how we are called.

We have gone absolutely as far as we can go in cutting back our mission together. Since Phoenix we have cut the legs off of it. Some would say that our financial planning has been prudent. Some would say that it was cautious. I am taking a risk with my heart and saying that we are being fearful. We are not challenging one another.

And while I am taking risks with my heart, I want to share with you another matter that lies heavy on it. Some of the reason for our financial difficulty is because we have allowed our sisters and brothers to believe that it

is acceptable to punish the totality of our body by withholding funds from our mission, or by being lukewarm about their participation as a way of saying that they are uncomfortable with the struggling we are doing around difficult issues: sexuality, inclusive language, racism, peace, justice, abortion, capital punishment, gun control, the Prayer Book...I could go on.

We have not risen up in the healthiness of our total corporate life and said "No." This is not acceptable. This is not of God. This is not stewardship." We have not said, "We need you. We love you. We are called together to be on mission and you can't just pick up your cards and go home."

We have cut \$3.5 million out of our budget since we left Phoenix. Let us name this for what it is: lost opportunities. The things that would have been done are worthy things. The people who would have been helped, here and around the world, have human faces. We decided in good faith that we did not have the money. But let us say that a little differently: What we said was that we couldn't raise the money.

When we made decisions about our national program, we wanted to share equitably in the hardships felt by dioceses and parishes. This is good and right and proper and appropriate. However, we did not take the next step that I believe is part of responsible and visionary leadership. We did not challenge our dioceses and our parishes to join in the common mission. We did not say, "Here are the needs and the commitments and if we all join in this we can not only do it, we can do it with love and zest and joy." We did not talk about living life abundantly, as Jesus did. We talked about dealing with the pinch.

I say we have cut the legs off of our common mission program. If we cut anymore, if we go below the bottom line of the Executive Council proposal, we will not just have cut off the legs, we will have cut out the heart.

I have been saying to Executive Council all through this triennium that we will come up with new and creative ways of being in partnership and then we will test them. The program proposals before us mean that dioceses and provinces will do more locally and that the national program will provide resources, and help network local efforts. Then, over the next three years, we will test this and see if we have the balance right.

I fear that we may have already gone too far. We must certainly go no further because we are on the path of retrenchment. During these opening days of convention there is something goading me and spurring me to say to you that I fear the program we are proposing is already precariously close to shutting off all sense of a common mission. We have so cut our national center that the dedicated men and women who are my staff are hard pressed to serve the provinces and dioceses. Their support staff have been cut in many

cases, and they have been given more to do. We are testing a new way of being in partnership, but it will not have a fair test if the national partner is so weakened that it can't assist the diocesan and provincial partners.

These Executive Council proposals mean both opportunity and risk. We have the opportunity of being mutually responsible and interdependent. We run the risk of becoming more fragmented, of drifting over the line from being locally empowered, into being narrowly parochial. Our safeguard against narrow parochialism and the loss of a sense of world mission is a strong center that challenges all of us to think beyond ourselves. To our peril do we at the same time try to strengthen the parish and diocesan partners and weaken the national partner. We need more accountability to one another, not less. Something is goading me and spurring me to say to you that if we change the bottom line on the Executive Council proposals, it must go up, not down. In 1992, the last year for which we have statistics, the assets of the church increased nine percent and the increase in each pledging unit was approximately five percent. Further, during a time when giving from parishes to diocese is going up -- which indicates a growing vision on the part of parishes about what it means to be part of a wider community -- we are vigorously pruning back the mission that reflects our commitment to the wider community, to our Anglican partners... What does this say about our vision of who we are?

We may be the victim of too many good ideas, some of which are clashing in time. I think we have planted some seeds but what we have is seedlings that need to remain for a while in the seed bed until they are hearty enough plants to go into the ground and take root, and flourish, and bear fruit. Changes in our funding method are proposed, and that is a good idea. One possibility is to base the asking on diocesan income. I personally support that. But some dioceses are not ready for that. There is a disparity between dioceses and what they ask of their parishes and how they challenge their parishes to be a diocese, with all that means. I believe that our dioceses need help in working on their funding systems. How are we going to provide that help? Is this the time to gut our stewardship program, as the cuts we have made have done?

It is not too late for us to be sure that the decisions we make about funding and spending are based on a sense of a creative new partnership and a sharing of resources between parishes, dioceses and the national program -- and not on a failure of nerve or a failure to respond to the imperatives of the Gospel. The program and budget which the Executive Council has submitted to you anticipates no increase in our funding. It is a cautious approach. Does this really say what we want to say about who we are? Is this in any way

related to all that I have just said to you about how God calls this church? I fear not. I remind you that caution and good stewardship are not necessarily the same.

What are we saying about ourselves and how we are called as a faith community when, as our total assets increase and our pledges increase, we make the decision to cut the legs off of what we do together? What does this say about our vision of who we can be? What does it say about our response to God's call.

I have taken a risk with my heart in saying all of this to you and now I wonder if you can be in this with me. As the bishops of this church and the leaders of the dioceses, are you willing to go back and say to your dioceses and to your parishes that we are one community called to witness boldly together to the Gospel? Are you willing to challenge your parishes and your dioceses to move beyond timidity to faithful witness?

My dear brothers and sisters, my community of faith, there is a way to be cautious and careful and take risks in faith all at the same time. The person swinging through the air, off of the trapeze, does so with every expectation of being caught. As Henri Nouwen said, the hero is the catcher. And who is our catcher? Is there any doubt? Is there any doubt that, if God calls us, God will be there for us? Is there any doubt that, if we do our part and use all of our skills and abilities to be wise about our funding and spending, that God will do God's part?

We have in our assembly people who are very wise about funding and spending.

Our Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance is laboring from early in the morning until late at night. They are struggling. They are listening. And I have no doubt that they are praying hard.

The Executive Council and I did what we were called to do. We looked at some bottom lines and worked hard and in good faith to propose new partnerships. Now PB&F will do what they are called to do, which is to sift and to sort all of this data and make some proposals to us.

Then General Convention will do what we are called to do. My dear friends, I believe we have seen the bottom line and now it is time to look up. And as we do, I believe we are going to see the face of Christ, smiling on our enterprise together.

94162

Sermon by Pamela Chinnis August 28, 1994 Hoosier Dome, Indianapolis 71st General Convention

We have come here today to celebrate the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

As we eat the bread, that is his body, and drink the wine, that is his blood, we partake in this eucharistic mystery, in a thanksgiving, a celebration unlike any other.

We have come to thank God for the ministry that we, sisters and brothers in the Episcopal Church, have been given. Specifically today, we have come to thank God for the ministry of women, lay and ordained, known and unknown, women here present, and our mothers who have gone before us. As we thank God for their gifts, we celebrate as well the wholeness they have brought to the ministry of our church.

We thank God for the ministry of women, and of men, for the ministry of all the baptized. Without the gifts of everyone, we would be diminished. We thank God for one another.

Our lessons this morning remind us that we are on the way to where God is calling us as the eucharistic people of God. We are on the way, but we have not yet arrived. Moses says to the Israelites on their journey, "You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord our God with which I am charging you." Many today worry that the church may be adding or taking away from the commandments of the Lord. Paul wrote to the Ephesians about armor and breastplates and shields and swords. Many today worry that such militaristic imagery perpetuates violence and hostility and conflict rather than peace-making. Today's reading from Mark's Gospel is all about purity codes and religious rituals and hypocrisy. Many today worry that our religious forms seem empty of spiritual content, breeding complacency and passivity when we should be on fire with the Gospel.

When I first looked at these readings my heart sank. How was I going to find in these texts the Good News God is speaking to us as a church gathered in General Convention -- to us as a community gathered this morning to glorify God and to give thanks for our shared life in Christ of women in the Church? But the lectionary turns out to be a blessed discipline after all. Instead of being able to pick a comfortable text to match what I might like to say today, I had to wrestle with uncomfortable texts and listen for what God

might have to say.

In Deuteronomy, Moses gives instructions for survival and prosperity in the promised land. He warns against putting trust in the wrong things, in false gods which lead to destruction. He reminds the people that the true God is faithful, has cared for them in the wilderness and desires to give them the land promised to their ancestors. To make it through the wilderness to that land of promise, they must be obedient to the law. They must observe all the ordinances and statutes diligently. They must forget nothing, and teach the law to their children and their children's children.

Why? Obedience for obedience sake? Because God is jealous and likes to make arbitrary rules? No, Moses commends these rules because they are wise and just, and because obedience will make it possible for them to live in peace together. Throughout the long history of the people of Israel and the church of Jesus Christ, much has been added to, and taken away from, the hundreds of Mosaic rules handed down to those exiles in the Sinai wilderness. But the touchstones judgment remain the same: wisdom, justice, the ability of the community to resolve its conflicts peacefully, to protect the young and the weak, to bear witness to the world around us of the boundless love of God for all creation.

Then what of Paul and his battle equipment? How helpful is this fighting imagery when we are beset by profound conflicts in the life of the church and seek to remain in love and community with those we believe to be dead wrong? Why talk about weapons and defenses when we are called to be open and vulnerable, to listen with love to those who oppose us? Are we to be "strong in the Lord" in order to defeat each other?

Paul recommends girding ourselves to withstand "the wiles of the devil," not to use weapons against each other. "Our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh," he reminds the Ephesians, but against "wickedness, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil." The forces of evil are powerful realities in our fallen world. The closer we come to discerning God's truth, the more we will be assailed by falsehood. The nearer we are to following Jesus in the Way, the more alluring will be other paths. The braver we are about dealing with hard issues, the louder will sound the voices of fear and division. The more we seek the Good News for our place and time, the more violent will be the forces that poison our trust and distort our motives and blind us to Christ in one another. We dare not dismiss Paul's warning about "the wiles of the devil" as some quaint or antique way of speaking. Nor dare we forget that our enemies are not flesh and blood, not other seeking Christians, not each other, but the spiritual forces of evil. This evil is well served if we allow

quarrels to distract us from God and our call to witness to God's love. As Jesus's witness to God's reign became clearer and stronger, the backlash against him also grew stronger: He kept bending the law to meet circumstances of people's lives, but how could peace, order or safety be maintained if laws were not consistently observed?

The religious establishment was in an uproar, but Jesus refused to be drawn into their conflicts. In desperation they joined with the secular powers of domination and death to eliminate the reproach of incarnate good, to reassert the clarity and decisiveness of Law against the amorphous, contingent adaptability of love. So he was crucified.

From the perspective of those in positions of responsibility, the nation had been saved. Peace and order were restored. How often we too are tempted to side with forces of domination and death in order to maintain peace and order. How often we too feel caught between the decisiveness of Law and the adaptability of love. If we follow Jesus we may be crucified. Is that Good News?

Look at Mark's Gospel for today, all about ritual purity -- washing pots and kettles, all about trying to trap Jesus by criticizing his followers, all about duty and upholding tradition. "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" They had him there, they thought. Nothing was clearer than the rules about cleanliness and food preparation, and the importance of rituals of physical purity as a metaphor for purity of life.

But Jesus threw tradition right back at them: "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites," he replied harshly, "'in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.'" And then he proceeded, as he so often did, to turn the law on its head. "Listen to me, all of you: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out -- from the human heart -- are what defile." What comes out is what determines your goodness or lack thereof: how you speak to and about others, how you treat them, whether you love.

This quarrel about washing, says Jesus, suggests that some of you are holding so fast to human precepts that you have abandoned the commandment of God. We are all in danger of such a failure, such confusion of our own agendas with the will of God, such confusion of our own agendas with the will of God, such presumption of our own righteousness that we readily condemn others who "eat with defiled hands." May God save us from making the law our god.

Now Jesus was not a scofflaw. He valued the law and the prophets. He knew and valued the traditions of his people. He came not to destroy but

to fulfill the law. His approach to law and tradition is crucial for us as we struggle with contradictory understandings of our religious traditions, as we live with "discontinuities" of interpretation and profound conflicts over how God will us to relate to one another. What Jesus did was neither to make a god of tradition nor to dismiss it as irrelevant, but to use the whole of tradition as a guide for living in the here and now, seeking beneath the surface of apparent conflicts the core meaning, finding the point of unity between seemingly irreconcilable opposites.

Nothing in our time demonstrates more powerfully the importance of staying with such apparent conflicts as does the emergence of women from the shadows of institutional life to join men in the full life and ministry of the church. The conflict over women's proper roles has been deep and long-lasting. For most of its life, the church has consisted of a near-invisible female workforce tending altars, evangelizing children, nursing the sick, feeding the hungry, caring for orphan and widow all directed by male clergy and vestrymen.

Even the money often came from women, beginning with those who provided for Jesus and his companions out of their own means. Think of them, and of the poor widow whose mite Jesus blessed, as the United Thank Offering coordinators come forward today. For 50 years, laywomen sought and were repeatedly denied opportunity to serve this church in the House of Deputies. Not until 1970 -- just 24 years ago -- was the constitution changed to permit it. Six years later, the way was officially opened for women in the priesthood and episcopate. Today, the number of lay women in the House of Deputies has increased to over 200 -- almost half the lay deputies.

There are some 60 women among the clerical deputies, and three women in the House of Bishops and we have our first women president and dean of an Episcopal seminary. Our liturgy this morning visibly manifests the way lay leadership and the ordained ministry are being made whole. As women enter the leadership of the church, the life of the whole community is renewed and refreshed. It would not have been conceivable just a few years ago for the General Convention and the Triennial Meeting to gather as we did Friday for a sober exploration of sexism. As the diversity of our leadership expands, our children can grow up with a deeper sense of our mutuality and interdependence with the Body of Christ.

But it does not happen automatically, nor without conflict and pain. Disagreements about women spill over into conflicts about sexuality, as age-old assumptions about human relationships are brought into question. This in turn seems to undermine all our expectations about authority in the household of faith. Many an anguished dialogue, many an angry debate

during this convention turns on just these conflicts.

"Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders," asked the Pharisees and the scribes. Jesus's response gives no comfort to partisans on any side of debates over tradition, while Paul's words to the Ephesians promise only that we must constantly beware the powers of evil. Despite Moses's assurance that all would be well if the Israelites simply followed the rules, the world has turned out to be a place where "following the rules" is neither simple nor guaranteed to make everything okay.

Jesus's approach to adapting the law in the service of love led him to the cross and grave. Our sins -- mine, yours -- conspire with the powers of domination and death the way the Pharisees and scribes conspired with Rome. Our sins -- yours, mine -- join with the spiritual forces of evil to attack and destroy the One who offers freedom and life. That is not good news.

The particularities of today's conflicts may one day appear as strange and irrelevant to the Gospel of Christ as conflicts over the proper washing of cups and pots and bronze kettles.

The Good News is that God loves us in spite of these conflicts and our anguished disagreements and our principled opposition and even our nasty attacks on one another. The Good News is that our sins -- yours and mine -- have been buried in the grave from which Christ rose victorious. The Good News is that God's love overcomes not only your sins and mine, not only the flawed and twisted witness of the church in the world, not only the broken language in which we try to tell others that we have seen the risen Christ, but all principalities and powers of falsehood, and domination, and even death itself.

That is the Good News that enables us to continue on our journey despite conflict and confusion and darkness. That is the Good News, whether we can comprehend it or not. For as God assured Julian of Norwich, "All shall we well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well." Thanks be to God.

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2. Sexuality issues continue to provoke debate (94136)
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4. Pamela Chinnis reelected president of the House of Deputies (94147)
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5. Convention eucharist honors ministry of women (94149)

6. Convention eucharist honors ministry of women (94149)
7. Service celebrates 20th anniversary of women's ordination (94155)
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9. Browning joins religious leaders at white house breakfast (94157)

